The Village

www.villageonline.co.uk

Issue #247 September 2024

NEWS & FEATURES from Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Blackwell, Burcot Beoley, Cofton Hackett, Finstall, Hopwood, Bordesley, Rowney Green, Lickey, Lickey End, Marlbrook, The Oakalls & everywhere in between!

The Woodlands Suite
Private Care at The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital

NHS
The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Expert care without the wait

Discover exceptional care and comfort at the Woodlands Suite at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham. Located within an esteemed NHS hospital, our private facility offers expert treatment and personalised care.

- Expert surgeons
- No waiting
- Outstanding patient experience
- Affordable pricing
- Support at every step

"We blend surgical expertise with innovative technology to offer you personalised care and exceptional clinical outcomes."

Professor Edward Davis, Consultant Surgeon

0121 685 4010
rohprivatecare.co.uk
private.suite@nhs.net

TheVillage Issue 247 Sept 2024

inside

Bringing you village life for more than 25 years

Editor:
Francesca Peach
Tel: 07536 987950
email:
fran@villageonline.co.uk
Follow us on Instagram:
@thevillagemag

To advertise in TheVillage
Call or Whatsapp Sales:
07536 987950
email:
fran@villageonline.co.uk
visit:
www.villageonline.co.uk

Publisher:
Richard Peach
richard@villageonline.co.uk

The Village (ISSN 1466-3376) is published by Platform Publishing & Media Ltd (Reg Office: 8 Fiery Hill Rd, Barnt Green, B45 8LF) and printed by Buxton Press in Derbyshire. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written consent is prohibited.
The publishers do not accept responsibility for any errors made in advertisements or for claims made by any advertisers which are incorrect. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason. All material submitted for publication is done so at the owner's risk and no responsibility is accepted by the publisher for its return.

A Butcher's Back
Pages 10

Parish Updates
Pages 11–16

Beoley Olympics
Page 18

Spotlight on Education
Pages 25–35

Rowney Opens Gates
Pages 52–53

Front cover: A scarecrow takes a nap at Rowney Green open gardens, taken by Michael Corfield: See Pages 52-53.

Royal Motorways
COACH HIRE AND DAYTRIPS

Our fleet of coaches is also available for Private Hire, School Trips, Sporting Events, Weddings, Event Transport and Regular Contracts.

Our 2024 Daybreak brochure is out now!

Our ever-popular programme offers a varied selection of excursions, from family days out, trips to popular seaside resorts, and historic venues, to market locations and cultural attractions, with some new additions too!

Call for a quote or a brochure today on:
01386 791842
You can download a copy from our website:
www.royalmotorways.co.uk
Or find us on Facebook for regular updates.

R.M.B SERVICES ALVECHURCH
Boiler service & breakdown engineer
as seen on Alvechurch Around & About Facebook page

IDEAL APPROVED INSTALLER
Boiler breakdown, Boiler servicing
Boiler Replacement
Home owner and landlord certificates
Call 07977 487 999
Find us on Facebook: 'RMB Services'

ARDEN BRIDGE SERVICES

MOT TESTING STATION

Servicing & Repairs
for all makes & models

TYRES
Supplied & Fitted

- MOT Testing Station
- Latest Diagnostic Equipment
- Collection & Delivery Service
- Courtesy Cars Available

Tel: 01564 742451 www.ardenbridge.com
Hill Top Garage, Alcester Road, Beoley, B98 9EP

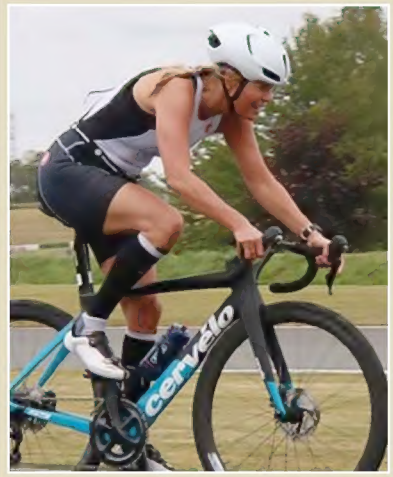
An Independent Family Owned Funeral Directors

THOMAS BROTHERS

Family owned funeral homes in Redditch, Wythall, Alvechurch, Bromsgrove & Alcester.
We provide a friendly, dignified service paying special attention to detail.

REDDITCH • BROMSGROVE
01527 547777 01527 831700
WYTHALL • ALVECHURCH • ALCESTER
01564 822001 0121 445 3422 01789 330939

"A family concern"
www.thomasbrothers.co.uk
email: admin@thomasbrothers.co.uk



Sam's racing strong

VILLAGE TRIATHLETE Sam Boswell is back competing two years after surgeons removed a 5kg tumour from her abdomen.

She raced against the best triathletes in the country at the British Triathlon Championships last month (left) as a way to keep her mind off the imminent results of a recent cancer scan.

And Sam was thrilled with her performance, which qualified her to represent Great Britain at next year's European Championships.

Then two days later she was given the news from the scan that she is currently all clear.

"I am over the moon to receive my latest news and to see that after cancer and the huge surgery I had to endure, it's still possible to race strong," Sam told *The Village*.

"I am so grateful to Elliott Nash Ltd who continued to sponsor me, even when I couldn't walk a mile, and to my wonderful surgeon. The help from family and friends has given me such strength."

9,000 homes 'needed'

INDEPENDENT councillors are warning villagers that the area is to be expected to absorb thousands of extra homes over the next two decades, with the Green Belt again under threat.

It is believed new targets emanating from a Government that sees housebuilding as a major driver of national growth will bring pressure to the fields around our villages.

One estimate is that the number of new homes needed to be built in Bromsgrove district between now and 2041 will rise from the current figure of 3,500 to 9,000 – an increase of 5,500.

The Bromsgrove District Local Plan for 2022-2041, which had been under consultation for many years before being delayed by national political changes, will now undergo renewed revision over the rest of this year.

A formal consultation is likely to take place around the new year, but by then it is thought the plan will already be a fully formed plan by council officers and leadership.

Independent councillor for Alvechurch Soouth Alan Bailes told *The Village* the coming months provided a "unique opportunity for residents to have their voices heard" about what new housing they would like to see, if any, and where it should go. It might be that residents want to see lots of new housebuilding, or they might want none.

"What is important is that this should be a plan for the residents," he added. "Over the coming months we will be trying to gather your beliefs about the development of housing in your area.

"The Independent councillors will be making known your views to officers at Bromsgrove District Council, so residents' views are heard and feed into the plan development process.

"We firmly believe that our residents should have an early part to play in formulating a Local Plan we can be proud of."

The councillors intend to seek villagers' views via a social media survey, asking such questions as: "Accepting there is a need for houses, how many houses do you think Alvechurch can support without any infrastructure improvements?"

Alternatively, residents can email Coun Alan or Rachael Bailes on: a.bailes@bromsgrove.gov.uk or Independent councillor for Barnt Green and Hopwood Charlie Hotham on: c.hotham@bromsgrove.gov.uk

PLANNING OFFICERS moved quickly to ensure a former water pumping station (above) constructed in Burcot in 1882 could not be demolished under permitted development rights.

They hope this short-term measure, enacted after an application was made for demolition, will enable the long-term retention of the building, which is considered to be a "heritage asset".

28-bed hotel plan vetoed

THE APPLICATION to turn the former Alvechurch Sports & Social Club into a 28-bedroom hotel was thrown out by Bromsgrove's planning committee.

There was spirited opposition from residents and councillors, including Coun Charlie Hotham, who told committee members that if the current building was considered a "carbuncle", the proposal to extend it would create a "juggernaut-buncle".

It was also pointed out that the plan would leave room for only 33 parking spaces for 28 bedrooms, plus those using the included pub as well parking for the staff working there.

Despite the planning officer recommending approval the application was refused, with the reasons given being: "The existing building was at odds with the historic and architectural character of the Alvechurch Conservation Area. The proposed extension would, by reason of its overall design, bulk, scale and massing, cause an unacceptable visual impact on the Alvechurch Conservation Area."

The rejection also pointed out: "The proposed development would, by reason of insufficient car parking, have a consequential displacement of vehicles to the public highway, resulting in a severe residual cumulative impact upon the surrounding road network."

Where will we park?

VILLAGE parking is at the top of the list of concerns for the new Alvechurch Business Partnership, despite the rejection of the plan for the social club. Currently the 40-plus spaces at the club can be used by members of the public under a long-standing arrangement between the former club and the parish and district council. But this comes to an end in November, to be replaced by a 30-minute monitored parking for residents.

A Bromsgrove council survey of parking needs across the district is to be undertaken, but the partnership is pushing for action to be taken now.

■ Bromsgrove District Council is planning to resurface the Tanyard Yard Lane Car Park in Alvechurch this month. The works are anticipated to start on September 23 and last for a week. "

REAL ALE FANS are hoping a new beer enthusiast will take over at their local after award-winning village landlord Chris Lamb (above) decided to step away from the demands of running a pub to devote more time to his young family.

Chris, who has run The Weighbridge Inn, Alvechurch, since 2021, winning the Bromsgrove & Redditch Pub of the Year for 2023, told *The Village*: "Sadly, I'm giving up the pub at the end of September.

"I'll be going back to my previous role as a housing officer, where I can have a better work life balance to spend more time with the family."

Now the hunt is on for someone able to keep up Chris's good work. "It would be amazing if we could find someone who's passionate about quality local real ale and community focus for the village," Chris added.

Call the pub on 0121 445 5111 for an application form (leave a voicemail if there is no answer).

Lickey lacking

THE VISITOR CENTRE at Lickey Hills Country Park has had a summer without a cafe since the previous operators decided to move on at the end of June.

Meanwhile, amid Birmingham City Council's financial crisis, the number of Rangers working in the park is being reduced from 32 to 20. This will mean that the level of support given by the Ranger Service to volunteer groups will be hit and already the Bilberry Wake had to be cancelled last month.

Lickey Visitor Centre: The toilets remain open, but there is no cafe.

Which gate to use?

THE PEDESTRIAN GATE at the CALA homes estate in Barnt Green is still to be unlocked, but it has been pointed out that main gate is often accessible.

Coun Charlie Hotham, who has been pursuing the matter of ensuring access is available to the public open space on the estate, told parish councillors: "The planning officer has attended the site several times and is in contact with the management company in trying to negotiate to unlock the gate.

"She has noticed that the main gate is often left open."

Coun Hotham added: "The planning officer is still adamant that they must unlock the pedestrian gate."

Danger route

THE LACK of safe pedestrian access between Barnt Green and Alvechurch using Sandhills Green was raised at Barnt Green Parish Council. County councillor Adrian Kriss told the councillors: "I have been told by highways engineers that this is extremely dangerous and you should not be walking under there."

20 From TheVillage archive Years Ago

OUR SEPTEMBER 2004 cover showed Norwegian Fjords Johan and Sassy, whose owners, Janice and John Corbett, were preparing to ride them along the South Downs Way in aid of BASICS, a charity providing support to the ambulance service.

IN THE NEWS: Hopwood residents were united in their opposition to a planned animal rendering plant in their village. A newly-formed campaign group, Hopwood Against Rendering Movement (HARM), had hired lawyers to assist in the fight and launched a public appeal to raise funds. *The Village* was also inundated with letters from people opposed to the plans, which included a 25-metre chimney and the capacity for rendering 100,000kg of offal every day.

ALVECHURCH FC were starting the new season with a new manager – Peter Frain, a former player for West Bromwich Albion and England Under-18s – and the team had kicked off a run of pre-season friendlies with a 5-1 away win against Bartley Green. The club was also seeking sponsorship for refurbishment.

LICKEY HILLS Primary School celebrated its 50th anniversary with a playground party for pupils past and present, staff and parents. A Junior School production featured iconic figures from the past five decades, and pupils also buried a time capsule and helped create a wall hanging.

10 From TheVillage archive Years Ago

OUR SEPTEMBER 2014 cover featured a wonderful picture of fresh conkers with the sheen of polished furniture taken by Dennis Brown, of Hopwood. This was a less controversial choice than the previous month which captured Alvechurch Morris men marking their 25th year of dancing in the village.

THE BIG APPLE: Artist Andy DeComyn carves a giant apple from the remains of a fallen black poplar in The Meadows, Alvechurch. He then carved the rest of the trunk into a huge serpent as part of an art installation aimed at bringing the community together.

THE MUSEUM **run by Alvechurch Historical Society offered a treasure trove (above) of village history during its open day. The museum is now gone, its site sold to pay for repairs to the church tower.**

THE NEWLY FORMED Alvechurch Bicycle Club prepared for their first ride. The club was one of a number of initiatives aimed at reviving the fortunes of Alvechurch Sports & Social Club, the site of which had recently been registed by the parish council as an Asset of Community Value to provide some protection from development.

RESERVE BEFORE OCTOBER AND RECEIVE £10,000 CASH BACK*

"I'm living the retirement I've always dreamed of"

Featured Retirement Property
22 Astley

Situated on the second floor of our Astley building, this contemporary two bedroom apartment features a light, open plan living space opening onto the generous private balcony.

FURNISHED TO VIEW

PRICED AT £415,000 INCLUDING BLINDS

CALL TODAY AND BOOK YOUR VIEWING

Sales suite open Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm
Call **01905 347121** or visit **mountbattenhall.co.uk**
Mount Battenhall, Worcester WR5 2JD

*Offer applies to selected apartments only. Valid on reservations before 30th September 2024, payable on legal completion. All properties are leasehold and are subject to monthly fees. Event fees apply on any disposal.

ARCO APPROVED OPERATOR

ENTERPRISE RETIREMENT LIVING
MOUNT BATTENHALL

Saving our bacon

Alvechurch celebrated a much anticipated arrival to the village this summer as **Village Butchers**, a traditional butcher's shop, opened on Red Lion Street, providing exciting new services alongside all the classic cuts and joints.

VILLAGERS breathed a collective sigh of relief to see a new business sign appear over the site of the butcher's shop on Red Lion Street, Alvechurch, which had been vacant since Clayton Fern retired in June.

Village Butchers opened its doors in August, to the delight of villagers who had missed having a local shop to buy their weekly meats.

Steven Fowler, 43, who started learning butchery at the age of 16, has taken up the mantle of "village butcher" and has 28 years' experience, during which time he has learned all aspects of the trade.

He said: "I have wanted my own shop for the last few years, so when I found out that Clayton was retiring, I thought that this was the perfect opportunity to take on a traditional butcher's shop.

"The people of the village have all been really welcoming, friendly and very enthusiastic to have a butcher's back in the village."

Steven sold out of Lashford's sausages within a few days of opening!

He told *The Village* that he is looking forward to stocking as much local produce as possible, and will be expanding their current range with new products, while also maintaining the more traditional cuts and joints.

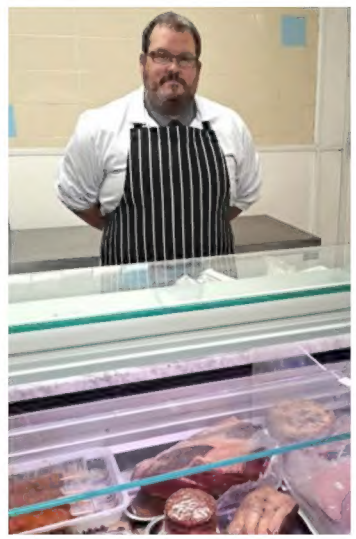
In addition to providing poultry, meats and village favourites such as pies, Steven is keen to expand and ensure that villagers are able to get what they need from the shop, and said: "If there is anything in particular you would like to order, please message our Facebook page or pop in to see us."

Open for business: Village Butchers receives a warm welcome.

Alongside the traditional butcher's shop, Steven also offers outside catering from his partner company **Bromsgrove Hog Roast**.

He said: "We've been offering hog roasts and BBQs for a number of years and now in addition to that, we have recently expanded our offerings to include stonebaked pizzas, a vintage style ice cream trike and a converted horsebox bar."

Bromsgrove Hog Roast can provide catering for a range of events, from small, intimate family gatherings to large corporate events.



For more information, including regular updates and deals, follow their Facebook page: "Village Butchers of Alvechurch"

You can also follow "Bromsgrove Hog Roast" for more details on outdoor and events catering.

From 1 October, Village Butchers will have their Christmas order forms available for you to order all everything you might need for Christmas including poultry, meat and pies.

Parish news

Alvechurch Parish Council
serving Alvechurch, Bordesley, Hopwood, Rowney Green and Weatheroak

Where have the Wiggin Memorial Gates gone?

If you are a regular visitor to The Wiggin Park and Meadows Playing Fields you may have noticed that the wrought iron gates at the entrance are not currently there.

The gates were very likely to have been installed when the parkland was given to the people of Alvechurch by the Wiggin family as a gift in memory of their son George Wiggin who was killed in WW1.

So after 100 years of service they were not looking their best. Alvechurch Parish Council, with a great deal of help and support from the District Councillor for Alvechurch Village Rachael Bailes, applied to Bromsgrove District Council for a Community Infrastructure Grant for the restoration of the gates and we are pleased to report our bid was successful.

The Community Infrastructure Grant is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The gates are currently being restored and will be ready for rehanging in a couple of months. We hope to arrange a small ceremony to mark this event .

Steve Hornsby Chair of Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee. Alvechurch Parish Council

Councillor Surgeries

We're holding Councillor Surgeries in Rowney Green and Bordesley in September. Follow our Facebook page for more details on dates.

Useful contacts

Alvechurch Village
Peter Freeman
Sue Lambert
Tony Williams
Keith Wiseman
Marc Worrall
Brett Shepherd
Nigel Cuttress

Hopwood
Paul Edwards
Samantha Lewis

Rowney Green and Bordesley
Stephen Hornsby
Barry Thornton

Have your say

We're keen to receive your comments or queries; do please contact the Parish Office if you wish to discuss any matter.

APC office
Jayne Smailes
Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer
clerk@alvechurch.gov.uk

Fay Murphy
Assistant Clerk
assistantclerk@alvechurch.gov.uk

Call us on **0121 447 8016**
Email **clerk@alvechurch.gov.uk**
www.alvechurch.gov.uk
/AlvechurchParishCouncil

Community in action

The team from **Alvechurch Community Larder** updates *The Village* on their progress and how you can help reduce food waste, get a weekly shop and save yourself money.

Plenty for all: The Larder has a range of food and products available.

ALVECHURCH Community Larder has become an established part of the village community with the warm and friendly atmosphere at every session bringing lots of benefits under one roof.

Since its establishment, the Larder has gone beyond reducing food waste, (sadly a part of our society), to also helping citizens within the community wherever possible. Although the Larder is not a food bank, it was always intended to be a peaceful, secure place with relevant information available.

At the Larder, our community can stand together with no stigma and do their bit towards global warming, stopping food going to landfill and benefit financially.

With our partner organisations who are often available at the Larder, there is the opportunity to get good quality advice from reliable sources.

We have had regular police clinics, visits from energy advisers, the fire service and Bromsrove District Housing Trust, who attend on the first Friday of each month, and a wealth of other information.

The first ever Larder was early in December in 2022, the culmination of a lot of planning and hard work, 22 customers visited, and the team were very pleased to start our task of reducing food waste.

Now, 20 months on, we average approximately 70 customers per week and we have distributed food to more than 300 households in the parish. Many of those customers have been with us since the first week, but we continue to get new customers. In the first two weeks of July we welcomed nine "newbies" and we hope to welcome many more.

We distribute food collected from Fareshare, (a national food re-distribution charity), Tesco's, Asda, FarmFoods, KFC, Aldi and from local individual donors who give us their surplus fruit and vegetables.

We also have two food donations baskets located in the dentist's and the entrance to the library/schools. We distribute household hygiene products and have recently been given a grant from the "Household Support Fund" to support dental health and period poverty.

We now have a joint initiative with the Baptist Church to re-cycle batteries and ink-cartridges in conjunction with Asda, our plastic waste is re-cycled at M&S and all of our leftover bread, fruit and veg goes to our partner animal sanctuaries or to compost.

We have attended Picnic in the Park and Rowney Green Fete and have given talks to Alvechurch WI. We have also spoken with pupils at Crown Meadow First School, we want to show the next generation what recycling means in practice – someone has to get the ball rolling.

We would like to express our thanks to all those who support us: The Baptist Church for hosting the Larder, various businesses in the village who have given donations, Bromsgrove District Council for their advice and guidance and our wonderful volunteers, more than 50, without whom it would not be possible.

We also need to thank our customers, whatever the reason you have for attending, for continuing to support us in our quest to reduce food waste.

We take food safety very seriously and while we do distribute some food that is beyond its "best before" date we do not distribute food that is beyond its "use by" date.

And following a recent visit by the Environmental health officer we were delighted to receive a 5 Star Food Hygiene rating from the Food Standards Agency.

Finally (don't tell anyone but) the volunteers, the visitors and our customers have a great deal of fun. Bring us a used battery and come and see us in action.

Alvechurch Community Larder is based in the Baptist Church and is open on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings.
Thursday 8pm – 9pm (doors open at 7.30pm).
Friday 11am – 12.30pm (doors open at 10.30am and there is a coffee morning in the church from 9.30am).

We can receive donations at any time when we are open or between 9am –12pm on Thursday mornings.
Visit our website for more: alvechurchcommunitylarder.co.uk

Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council News

Newsletter September 2024

Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council (LBPC) has had a busy summer with ongoing activities in the community. Here is a summary of what has been happening in the Parish.

Cropwood and Hunters Hill

In June we invited the Head of Operational Property Management at Birmingham City Council, Philip Andrews, to our monthly meeting. He was asked to respond to the concerns of residents regarding the future of Cropwood Estate and Hunters Hill. The Council also reported to him that the site has been plagued by graffiti and vandalism.
Mr Andrews advised those present that a report is being prepared by a consultant on behalf of the trust managing the site, this is to determine the best way to dispose of the estate. He reassured residents that the Police were involved in any incidents and that there are security measures in place.
He will be returning to the meeting of September 16th in Blackwell, to give an update on any decisions being taken.

Blackwell Play Area

LBPC has been awarded a grant via Bromsgrove District Council, funded by the Government, which will be used to improve and refurbish the children's Play Area in Blackwell.
We have undertaken a survey of children and parents who use the play area, asking for views on the play area now and suggestions for improvements. With the assistance of the pupils of Blackwell First School, new equipment has been selected.
The Play Area will be closed for a week or so in early October to enable installation of new items and refurbishment of those that are staying.
The plans involve making the Play Area more inclusive and improve the environment, this will involve more inclusive equipment being installed and the addition of a wildflower border.
Please excuse any inconvenience while this work takes place.

Best Front Garden: Elaine and Tabitha Darby (centre) receiving their prize from Cllrs Josh Gwilliam and Bernice Jones.

Winning gardens: Mr and Mrs Suggett receiving their prize.

Best Front Garden

The Parish Council held the annual Best Front Garden competition in June. Judges (councillors and residents) went around the whole Parish to examine the beautifully manicured front gardens. Categories chosen on this occasion were large/medium sized gardens and small gardens. A prize giving ceremony took place on 30th June 2024 at the Trinity Church.

The winners were:
Large Garden:
1st Prize – 6 St Catherines Road.
2nd Prize – 8 The Avenue.
Medium/Small Gardens:
1st Prize – 38 Wentworth Drive.
2nd Prize – 39 Greenfield Avenue.
Blackwell Club was chosen as the community garden.

Highways Matters

The Blackwell bus shelter has been repaired after it was made unsafe following recent vandalism.
Many thanks to residents for their help with maintaining our beautiful Parish, as well as to our Lengthsman Wendy, the team from Bromsgrove District Council, our footpath warden Paul Harvey, our contractors 4 Seasons and our handyperson Andrew Carter.

Vacancy

We have a vacancy for a councillor and another for a Tree Warden, please do contact our Executive Officer for more details.

Contact Us

Lisa Winterbourn, our Executive Officer, may be contacted on:
eo@lickeyandblackwell-pc.gov.uk
or: 07930 837770.
For more info visit: www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org
or facebook.com/lickeyandblackwellcouncil

Cofton Hackett Parish Council

Annual Report: April 2023 - March 2024

THE Annual Parish Assembly took place on 15 May 2024 at Cofton Village Hall and reviewed the activities of the Parish Council over the past financial year.

Finance and General Purposes

The year opened with £164,000 and closed with £369,000. The significant increase in income was due to the sale of the Mission Hall. The early payment of the first portion of the 24/25 precept (£29,000), in the 23/24 financial year also slightly skews the year-end cash position.

The table (below) presents a summary of the Accounting Statement filed for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Regarding expenditure, the major costs in General and Admin, £22,000, were driven by staff wages and insurance.

Other significant expenditure items were Street Light maintenance and electricity, £11,000; Open Spaces costs, £6,000. Other one-off expenditures such as Vehicle Activated Signs, £8,000, and costs associated with the sale of the Mission Hall, £8,000, were met from General Reserves.

The Council is holding a significant amount of cash allocated to Earmarked and General Reserves. The income from the sale of the Mission Hall is earmarked for future capital expenditure on existing council owned assets such as playground improvements, upgrading the infrastructure of Cofton Village Hall and investment on the site of Cofton Hackett Village Hall when the current lease expires in 2028.

The current assets that the Council owns are Cofton Village Hall (£1.3m), Lights, Noticeboards, Playground equipment etc. (£125,000), Cofton Hackett Village Hall land (£68,000), Playing Field & Allotments (£10,000) and Sewage works (£3,000).

Highways

The Parish Council maintains the streetlights on the adopted minor roads and has a policy of converting the old sodium lights to LED lights when the sodium ones fail.

More than 75% of the streetlights are now LEDs. Three new Vehicle Activated Speed Signs, funded by the Parish Council, have been installed on Groveley Lane, Barnt Green Road and Kendal End Road.

The Council has been successful in securing funding for a further two devices.

Councillors have agreed to install one of these on Lickey Road, on the approach to the traffic island, the location for the second is yet to be agreed. In addition to displaying speed of the traffic, the signs record the speeds in both directions.

This data is downloaded every three months and summarised on the Parish Council's website (www.coftonhackettparishcouncil.gov.uk) and the newly installed speed signs are reversed every three months.

Planning

During the previous 12 months the Parish Council has considered and commented on 12 planning applications. Most applications are for minor works such as extensions, but Councillors always view plans, consult with neighbours and ensure comments are posted on the Bromsgrove Panning Portal.
The Council objected to one application, a decision on this application is awaited, and made comments and observations on a further four applications.

	31 March 2023 (£)	31 March 2024 (£)	Notes
Balances brought forward	143,475	163,765	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year.
Precept or Levies Income	51,830	83,790	Total amount of precept and levies.
Total other income	22,906	192,965	Total other income or receipts
Total expenditure	54,446	70,814	
Balances carried forward	163,765	369,706	
Total fixed assets	1,661,033	1,506,433	Value of all the property the Council owns.

Community Engagement

The Council gave three grants during the year, which were contributions towards the Coronation and Christmas celebrations plus a donation towards St. Michael's Church car park improvements.

Biodiversity

Yasmina Ashcroft, from the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, gave a very informative talk about her work and how people at home can encourage wildlife into their gardens.
She also introduced a project within Cofton Hackett to encourage Swifts to return to their nesting sites in the Parish, she asked if residents would like to join a pool of volunteers on this initiative.

Cofton Hackett Parish Council has established a biodiversity project run by a dedicated team of (currently) 12 volunteers, which is supported by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

The initiative is being developed on land owned by the Parish Council adjacent to the Myhill Field Allotments and comprises a small, wooded area, about a third of an acre in size, which has the potential to be rich in biodiversity. The area already includes a variety of native trees and shrubs, including oak, ash and holly, and has a permanent water source.

Work on the site began in May and volunteers have been working hard to remove Himalayan Balsam from the boggy areas as well as beginning to plan the layout of paths and other features.

Bird boxes, bug hotels and hedgehog hides are being positioned around the site and there are plans to develop a small wildlife pond and a small open meadow area.

Volunteer Mike Pattison says: "It is an exciting project with lots of potential. At the moment we're in the early stages of developing the site and it'll be interesting to see what emerges in the coming months now the Himalayan Balsam has largely been cleared.

"In the autumn we're looking forward to planting some native shrubs around the boundary and, next year, to laying out the paths and providing some basic structure to the site. We also hope to take an inventory of all the wildlife and biodiversity evident once we have properly mapped the area.

"The site will have managed access only to protect the biodiversity, but in the longer term we hope to find ways to carefully establish it as an education resource. There is a great sense of community and purpose while working on the project.

"Our group of volunteers includes some impressive expertise in horticulture and ecology & biodiversity management, but there are others, like me, who are just interested amateur enthusiasts. Anyone with an interest is very welcome to join us."

If you would like to volunteer, simply email the clerk to the Parish Council to express your interest (details below).

Biodiversity project: The volunteer team has been working hard to clear Himalayan Balsam and improve the area for visitors and local wildlife.

Communications

The Parish Council utilises its website www.coftonhackettparishcouncil.gov.uk and occasional pages in *The Village* magazine as its main methods of communication with the public.
Parishioners are encouraged to contact the clerk of the council if they have any questions or comments about the Council's activities.

County Councillor Report

County Cllr Adrian Kriss presented his report on work he had been doing locally over the previous 12 months to March 2024.

Despite a challenging year for Worcestershire County Council (WCC), not only in budgetary restraints but also the finding of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the Council Hall, he has been utilising both divisional and highways funds for the benefit of Cofton Hackett.

He continues to press for a pedestrian crossing in Groveley Lane where the topography of the area makes the proposition more costly

continues overleaf

Any views and opinions on this page are those of Cofton Hackett Parish Council.

continues from previous page

than normal. Parking and speeding continue to be problems for Cofton Hackett.

In an effort to prevent cars parking on the zigzag area associated with traffic lights near Cofton Manor Park care home, which impacts the visibility of cars exiting the car park, Cllr Kriss is continuing to liaise with both the Civil Enforcement Officers in Bromsgrove and the local businesses.

Looking forward, he would like to see engagement throughout the Cofton Community towards implementing active travel alternatives through agreed suggestions. Short journeys are still undertaken by cars rather than other modes of transport. County Cllr Kriss would, in particular, welcome any suggestions for cycle routes.

Instigation of a "Police vehicle/bus stop," sharing area on Barnt Green road will allow for speed enforcement to take place regularly and, with this in mind, if Cofton Hackett could manage to get a fully trained Street Watch team in place with at least six volunteers, this issue would likely be minimised. Please email the Clerk (details below) if you would like to find out more or volunteer to be a member of this Cofton Hackett Street Watch Team.

The issue with floodwater pouring into Cofton Church Lane and flooding the low point under the bridge has now been resolved. This water was not the collection of water from the highway but from the new estate and as such should not drain onto the highway. Measures to alleviate this have now been agreed.

Cofton Hackett is a wonderful place for active walkers. The siding out of Kendal End Road and the Stocken are regularly used by walkers to Barnt Green and, with the near completion of work at the former, County Cllr Kriss will ensure that they are maintained to good order.

District Councillor Report

On Street Parking has been an ongoing issue and therefore a Cabinet Advisory Group has been formed and Waterman consultants commissioned to devise a strategy to address this across the district. Their recommendations will be forthcoming in due course. The motion was carried in February's full council meeting to review the parking charges and consultation with the public has been taking place. This includes Blue Badge holders who will be able to park free of charge which is a key change to the current regulations. Car parking charges changed in June 2024.

The Council's refuse fleet refurbishment is in dire need of replacement vehicles which will be at a substantial cost. Overview and Scrutiny, of which Cllr Anita Dale is a member, will be reviewing their operation before any monies are spent.

Access to GP appointments out of hours is being investigated via our Bromsgrove District Council Health O&S representative at Worcestershire Regulatory Authority are hoping to be able to introduce this across the Bromsgrove region.

The Cost of Living crisis: The result of two surveys carried out to better understand the specific needs of local communities arising from the cost-of-living crisis highlighted that the crisis was affecting a broad range of residents, not just those on benefits or a lower income. An earmarked reserve sum of money for Community Hubs initiative (currently not used) is now to be used to support the initiative over a 14-month trial period, by introducing a Citizens Advice Specialist Housing Advisor and a Voluntary Sector Money Advisor. The District Council has been awarded a fund from the Household Support Fund Round five for a six-month period and £29,500 of this will be spent on supporting food banks in the district.

Carbon Reduction – The Carbon Reduction annual review: Bromsgrove District Council's pledge is to be operational at net zero by 2040. BDHT is to apply for funding to improve efficiency in housing stock within the District. Bids are also being submitted for Bromsgrove Sports & Leisure centre to enable energy efficiency upgrades in this building. Commercial partners being sought in respect of the Bromsgrove District Heat Network partnership.

Cllr Anita Dale

General Comments

The Chairman, Cllr Slack, made a few personal comments: "I would like to express my thanks to Mike Pattison. Mike was last year's Chairman, and I took over from Mike after he resigned in February for personal reasons. Mike was a terrific Chairman and contributed so much time and effort into the role. He has, and still is, doing a terrific job working to integrate the old and New Cofton Hackett. He is sorely missed on the Parish Council.

"I'd also like to thank Nick Banyard, who resigned in March, for his valuable contribution to the Parish Council, Nick was pivotal in getting the new PC website up and running. I would also like to express my thanks to Andrew Billau, our clerk. Andrew keeps us all on the straight and narrow, regarding what we can and cannot do as Parish Councillors and does a really good job in getting the routine jobs, the PC needs to get done."

"One further general point I would like to make is that the PC is acutely aware of the disparity that exists in the value for money, regarding the precept, that residents of the Cofton Fields Estate get compared to residents of the more established areas of Cofton Hackett. Mike Pattison mentioned this last year and we continue to explore ways of utilising PC resources more equitably".

Vacancies for Parish Councillors

The Parish Council has nine positions for Parish Councillors. At the time of writing we have two vacancies, if you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, and to find out more, please email the Clerk.

Contact the Clerk

Email:
clerk@coftonhackettparishcouncil.gov.uk
Telephone: 07496 979153

Home-and-away cruise

It's been an eventful summer holiday for Cofton Hackett care home residents, who embarked on a week-long cruise – all without leaving home!

RESIDENTS of **Cofton Park Manor** enjoyed an extraordinary cruise experience this summer, all without stepping outside their luxury care home.

The week-long event offered a series of themed "stopovers" at various sun-soaked destinations, transforming the care home into a vibrant vacation hotspot.

Throughout the week, residents indulged in the flavours and festivities of different locations. The journey kicked off with a taste of Mexico, followed by a tropical Hawaiian paradise filled with fun and games.

Midweek, residents dressed in their finest attire for an elegant afternoon in the Bahamas, complete with the vibrant sounds of a live steel pan band playing Caribbean rhythms in the care home's grounds.

The final stop on this imaginative cruise was Florida, where younger visitors joined the fun, dressing up as their favourite *Disney* characters, adding a magical touch to the event.

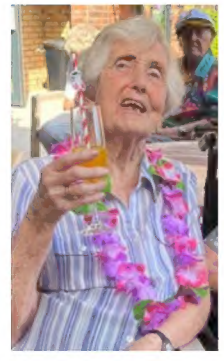
The week was such a hit that a news team from ITV even stopped by to capture the excitement.

For those interested in witnessing the fun, Cofton Park Manor has shared highlights of the event on their Facebook page where many of their other activities are also showcased.

Looking ahead, Cofton Park Manor is inviting the community to join them for their next exciting event – a comedy and cocktails evening on October 18th from 6:30 to 7:30pm.

To book your complimentary place at the event, contact the dedicated team at 01213 872722 or via email at Wendy.Sibley@hamberleycarehomes.co.uk.

Cofton Park Manor staff and residents enjoyed welcoming an ITV news crew to join the festivities.



Clockwise from above: A tropical Hawaiian themed 'stop' on the cruise, complete with drinks, and accessories. Residents and staff dressed up for a fancy afternoon in the Bahamas. More tropical fun in 'Hawaii'.

To find out more about life at this luxury care home, book your tour with their friendly team today on 01213 872722 or email Wendy.Sibley@hamberleycarehomes.co.uk

Cofton Park Manor | 466 Lickey Road | Cofton Hackett | B45 8UU

Words and pictures by Keith Woolford

Olympic levels of fun

ST Leonard's Church in Beoley hosted its annual Summer Fete, this time with an apt Olympics theme.

Rev. Martin Allen offered visitors a warm welcome to the churchyard, which was adorned with colourful bunting and plenty of stalls to enjoy.

Despite the damp weather in July, visitors enjoyed exploring the games stalls which kept villagers of all ages entertained. The stalls included a traditional coconut shy, "splat the rat" and more, all to the sound of live music.

Cakes were aplenty, with lots to delicious treats to choose from and further refreshments were served in the tapestry room.

From ticket sales and raffle prizes, the fete's Grand Draw raised more than £1,000 to the delight of organisers. The money raised will go towards the maintenance of the church, and support the church's work in the community.

Gold for Britain: Visitors embrace the Olympics theme.

Happy faces at the stalls. . . and a vaccuum cleaner?

A youngster enjoys splatting some rats.

The stalls looking jolly adored in bunting.

The well-stocked and delicious, cake stall.

Villagers show off a beautiful patchwork quilt.

Young villagers enjoy a range of stalls and games .

Rev. Allen welcomes villagers to the Fete.

The cakes prove popular among all visitors.

All-inclusive

LUXURY LIVING IN BURCOT

We are focused on the happiness of each and every one of our residents and we love being able to help make the most of the wonderful facilities on offer at Burcot, which include a full and varied timetable of activities for all to enjoy.

Our belief is for every one of our residents to 'Live well today and thrive tomorrow' and at Burcot Grange & Lodge there is a plethora of opportunity to enable everyone to do so.

MEET & GREET MONDAYS *for those living with dementia*
Every last Monday of the month, come and join us for an afternoon of singing, dancing and refreshments between 2:00 and 5:00pm

DROP-IN *Clinic*
On the 4th Thursday of the month, join us for financial advice or support with Will's, Power of Attorney, Trusts and more. Our advisors will be available between 10:00am and 1:00pm and we'll be serving light refreshments throughout

OPEN *Day*
On Saturday 28th September from 10am to 4pm, we look forward to welcoming you into our home to show you around our beautiful home, spectacular gardens and experience the refreshments of our wonderful Chef and Hospitality Team. If you are looking for a care home that really is 'All Inclusive', why not join us?

Find out more about our amazing care home, and what all-inclusive really looks like.
telephone: 0121 445 5552, or visit: burcotgrange.co.uk

WHERE'S THE DRAMA?

Dear Editor – What a happy, joyous and contented lot the residents of Alvechurch really are.

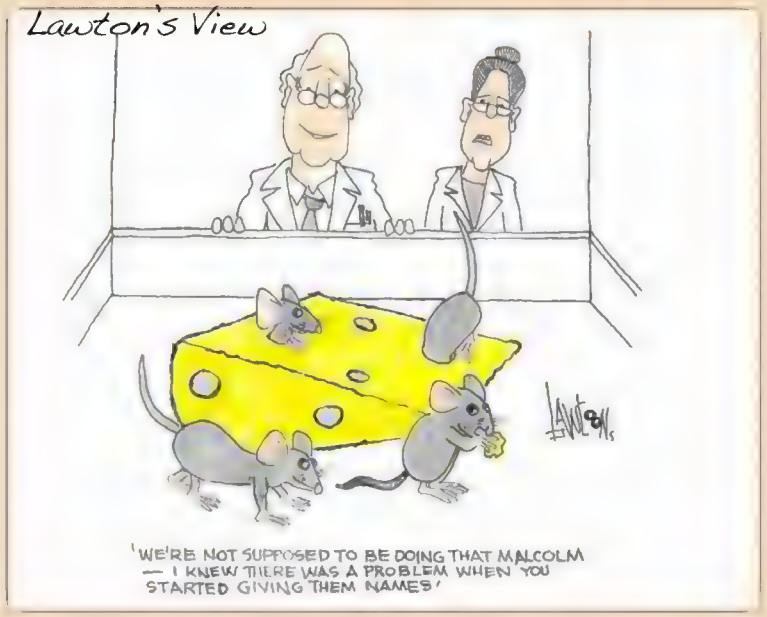
On receipt of this month's *The Village* (July/August 2024), I eagerly turned to the *Letters* page hoping to be enlightened by some startling piece of gossip or an amusing anecdote or even a brain-boggling piece of yet-undisclosed historical history regarding our beautiful village.

Sadly, apart from two interesting letters, one, a memory-jogging request for a piece of Safeway history and the other, a knock at the new proposed bus route service . . . and that was it.

I still recall the on-going saga of the Alvechurch Highway landfill discussions and the varied comments regarding blacked-up Morris Men, bonfires, dangerous parking on pavements etc. The list was endless, and lasted for at least two months (if not more) worth of magazine reading. Now it's all over in a flash.

Where's that book I was reading?

John B Holland, Alvechurch



A balanced village

Dear Editor – It is fantastic to see a new partnership has been created "to improve and raise the profile of Alvechurch by making it an attractive, accessible, safer and better place to live".

This is exactly what we need in order to stop the rot of closing shops and to enhance local businesses etc.

But then. . . OH NO! On the same page we see examples of how they are thinking. Further restrictions (on parking), stopping new development, (on the old Sports & Social Club). Where is their positive thinking?

What we need for creating a vibrant community is *people*. More people, who will make the shops viable, who will bring more of everything to our local community; including more money.

We must move forward into the new era under our new Government, where Nimbyism is balanced – not obliterated – but balanced with thoughtful, local, objectives of how to expand our community into that vibrant, attractive, accessible, safer and better place that we all want.

John Impney, Alvechurch

Editor's note: *We agree with John (above)! We know that a lot has changed since* The Village *was established 26 years ago, including the invention of social media and platforms where anyone and everyone can put their thoughts out there for the world to see, immediately, from the palm of their hand.*

The majority of the letters we receive now are emails rather than through the post, and people emailing in have to wait for the next issue to come out to see if we print it, which doesn't always go down well in this "instant" world.

We enjoy hearing your views and starting a conversation – as does the whole Village *community, as John points out in his letter. And hopefully, letters published here are a little more measured, and certainly less angry, than on social media.*

So, to encourage more conversation in our paper pages, we will be trialling a "best letter" prize. Each issue we will choose a "winning" letter, which will go in the prime spot on these pages – and win its author a ***£25 prize****.*

So, send us a letter; a musing, a rant, an appreciative mention - we want to hear it!

Have your say . . . about anything!

email: editor@villageonline.co.uk

Please include your name and address – even if you request them to be withheld from publication.
We reserve the right to edit submissions for reasons of space or legality.
The deadline for the next issue is September 10th 2024.

WHERE'S VINNY?

DAISY Badger, aged three, from Barnt Green, shows off the Mini Vinny she won for finding the little creature in July/August's hunt the hedgehog competition in *The Village* magazine.

If you want to win one for yourself, you'll need to try to find the little hedgehog hiding somewhere in this magazine (the one shown above is just a guide).

Tell us where he's hiding via email – see details on the bottom of the page opposite – and please include your name, address and phone number, and we'll draw a winner at random.

The closing date is midnight on 7 September 2024. We'll let you know if you've won and you can collect your Mini Vinny from our office – and pose for a photo with your prize!

Safeway memories

Dear Editor – I saw the picture of the Safeway shop in the recent July/August issue.

I won't be able to help much, but my late husband's parents owned the shop in the late 1950s or early 1960s, if my memory serves me right, for about three years.

They were Jim and Gwen Whitmore; I can't recall much detail about the time as I was not part of the family then, only if conversation had touched on the subject of Alvechurch.

Although the picture is not very clear, it possibly could be Gwen on the left outside the shop. She had that sort of figure. I didn't get to know her until 1971, so you should understand those are my memories.

Judy Whitmore, Redditch

'Bug Row': On Swan Street – the houses were knocked down and replaced by a new row of terraced houses.

Looking back at Bug Row

Dear Editor – Responding to the letter in the July/August edition of *The Village* featuring Safeway it occurred to me that readers may find this image of "Bug Row" that stood on Swan Street of interest.

I was born in Bug Row in 1938. The inside of the cottages consisted of one room downstairs, with a black range – with fire place and oven for cooking, and also a small pantry. Upstairs were two bedrooms. Gaslight lit the downstairs room, upstairs it was a candle.

Four outside lavatories were shared between the six families. Two brew houses, each with a cold water tap and copper boiler for washing. The copper boiler heated from below with wood/coal or whatever came to hand.

I'm not sure when they were

continues overleaf

continues from previous page

demolished and replaced by the present row of houses I think it may have been in the late 1950s early 1960s.

On the far left of the image of Bug Row, just about visible, is what I believe to be a picture of *The Village* offices.

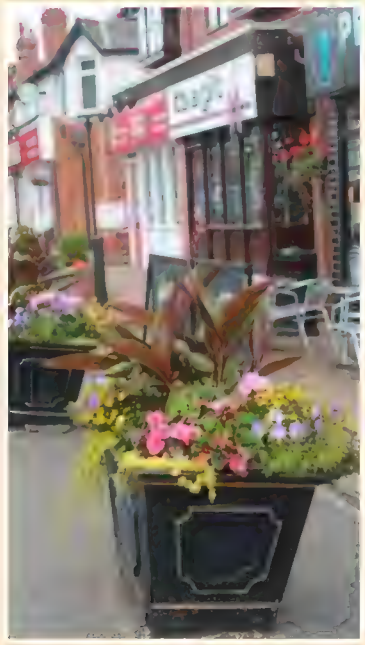
Terry Louch, Alvechurch

Editor's note: The Village *has a copy of this photograph hanging in our office "The Limes", which Terry correctly identified in the image, partially hidden by a tree.*

Planters Pride

Dear Editor – I would like to thank Barnt Green Parish Council and Oasis for the really spectacular flower containers. I am sure they are the best we have ever had!

Rachel Banner
Barnt Green



Barnt Green planters: A fountain of colour.

The Village Halloween issue

In addition to your letters, we would also love to hear your ghost stories and tales of the unexplained for our October issue. We've had some fantastic goosebump-inducing stories in the past and want to hear more! Email your tales to: editor@villageonline.co.uk

New beginnings at Bremi's

ASTON FIELDS welcomed a new independent bar this summer, as Bremi's, located on Stoke Road opened it's doors and uncorked it's bottles.

Formerly a carpet shop, the property has been thoroughly renovated to reveal a stylish new bar.

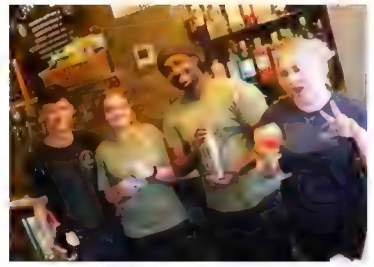
The owners, Jason Pirie and Martyn Rollason, who have been best friends since they were teenagers, said: "Although there are great places to eat and drink in the area, we wanted to provide an alternative and a high quality drinks experience."

Jason, whose long held dream was finally realised with Bremi's, added that their small function room can be booked at no cost for private parties and events. Tables can also be reserved in the large principal area.

With plenty of cosy nooks, those who work from home are encouraged to pop in for refreshments and use their fast internet!

Bremi's is also dog-friendly, so you can enjoy a well-deserved drink at the end of a long dog walk.

Buzzing atmosphere: Visitors enjoy a drink and great vibes at Bremi's.



Bremi's has hired more than 20 local people.

Co-owners Martyn and Jason during the renovation of Bremi's.

Cycling for charity

CHAINGANG, a Barnt Green based cycling club, were thrilled to make a donation to Acorns Children's Hospice.

Chaingang recently updated their Club kit and as part of kit payment, members had the option to make a donation to Acorns. Their generosity, plus a top-up from the Club Committee, made the grand £700 total.

Club members Jude Billingham, Gary Moreton, Simon Stanley, Kate Gallimore and the recently appointed Chair of Chuggers & Chaingang, Matthew Brereton presented the cheque to Laura, Area Fund Raising Officer for Acorns (pictured right at Acorns on Hewell Road, Barnt Green). A thank you also goes to Chainganger Pete Bennett for his contribution.

Barnt Green Chuggers (Running) and Chaingang (Cycling) are a local non-profit community Club who are based at Barnt Green Sports Club and cater for all running and cycling abilities.

The club has a healthy membership of 170+ and are always keen to welcome more members.

If you are wanting to stay in shape, if you used to run or cycle and would like to start again, or would simply like to enjoy some recreational runs and rides with some friendly local people – please contact Membership Secretary Kate Gallimore kategallimore@googlemail.com or visit www.barntgreenchuggers.co.uk

KNITTING FOR GOOD CAUSES

VILLAGE knitting group Knit and Natter presented cheques for £500 to both The Lounge Community Cafe, Alvechurch, and to Penny Church on behalf of Brain Tumour Research.

The group raised funds through table top sales of their fantastic creations, and commissions of specific knitted toys and children's clothes.

On receiving the cheque, Penny said: "You are all amazing, as always thank you so much for continuing to raise so much money for us".

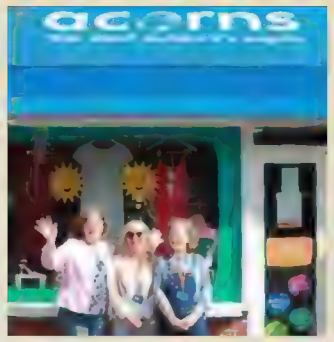
Sarah James, Manager at The Lounge, said: "Wow, thank you so much that's absolutely brilliant."

Knit and Natter will be running a table top sale on 28 September outside The Lounge, in The Square, Alvechurch, between 10am –2pm, where you can pick up some wonderful homemade items including toys and baby clothes.

If you are interested in joining Knit and Natter, please contact Cynthia Lawton on 07909 606 961. Membership is £2 and the group is open to all, as long as you can knit.

Presenting the donations: Cynthia Lawton hands a cheque to Penny Church (left), Daphne Cross presents the other to Sarah James.

The talented ladies of Knit and Natter.



FASHION FUNDRAISER: Acorn's Children's Hospice shop in Barnt Green (pictured above with Acorns staff Karen, Alison and Sandra) will be hosting a fashion show: "Cast-offs to Cat Walk", in conjunction with Barnt Green WI.

The fashion show, which uses "all the best finds" of donated clothing, will take place on Thursday 3 October at 7pm at Barnt Green Baptist Hall. Tickets for which can be bought from Acorns shop in Barnt Green for £12 each. There will be a raffle, opportunities to buy clothes and accessories and refreshments available.

BOOM ... WHACK ... FUN

The Midland Sinfonia visited Blackwell First School pupils to introduce them to "Boomwhackers", *writes Keith Woolford.*

The nifty coloured percussion tubes, which are banged together to create notes, had the children quickly develop a series of melodic sounds with great enthusiasm.

The OutReach session was led by TMS Artistic Director Shulah Oliver-Smith, to much delight from the participants, and it was clear that the professional musicians were literally a "big hit".

Spotlight on Education

TheVillage
Autumn 2024

A guide to school and college opportunities for Village readers

Discover RGS Dodderhill

RGS Dodderhill – a nurturing school that empowers children to become confident, big thinkers, offering a wealth of Co-curricular and leadership opportunities.

NESTLED in the heart of Droitwich Spa, RGS Dodderhill offers a unique blend of nursery and Prep School education for boys and girls aged 2 to 11, and a Senior School for girls aged 11 to 16.

Our small class sizes ensure that every child is known and receives individual care and attention, whilst enjoying the facilities typical of much larger schools as a part of the RGS Worcester Family of Schools.

At RGS Dodderhill, small class sizes are the cornerstone of our educational philosophy. This enables personalised learning which translates into outstanding exam results and being the top school for Attainment 8 in the county.

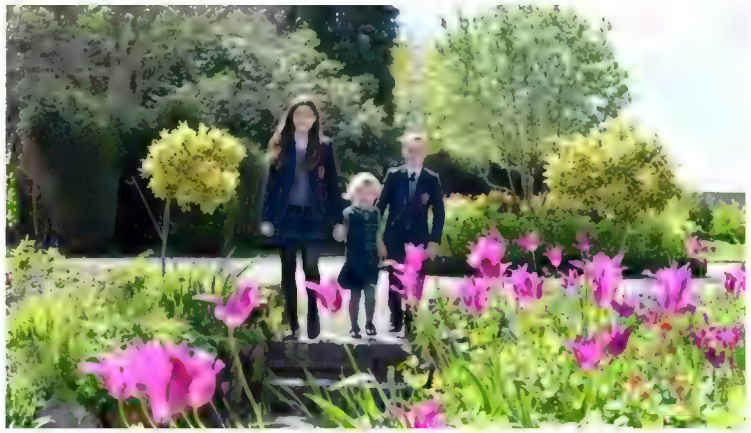
Our newly refurbished, award-winning nursery and reception classes are recognised for excellence in early childhood education, ensuring the best start for our youngest learners. Our nursery was recognised by Day Nurseries as one of the Top 20 Nursery Groups in the UK.

In our Prep School, enthusiastic and dedicated teaching staff inspire a love of learning, with all pupils benefiting from specialist teachers in languages, sports, and music.

Older Prep pupils are taught in specialist facilities by Senior School teachers for Science and Art to ease the transition to the Senior School and stretch them academically. This ensures children's skills are enhanced from the beginning of their educational journey.

In the Senior School, our Girls only education model encourages girls to take up and excel in STEM subjects with a high percentage going on to study them at A-Level and beyond.

Girls at RGS Dodderhill are more likely to participate in sports and stay active, supported by excellent on-site sports facilities, including extensive sports fields, netball and tennis courts, and brand-new cricket facilities.



A caring school for pupils aged 2–16 to grow and thrive in.

At our School, we believe in nurturing the leaders of tomorrow by providing a wide range of leadership opportunities. At the top of the school, Year 11 pupils can take on leadership roles earlier, including positions as House Leaders, Head Girl, and members of the School Leadership Team.

In the Prep School leadership opportunities include Year Six House Leaders, School Council and Digital Leaders who promote digital safety. This builds confidence and cultivates a strong sense of responsibility and community

RGS Dodderhill is renowned for its exceptional pastoral care, providing an individualised programme of support to ensure that every pupil thrives.

Our seven-acre School site has exceptional outdoor facilities, including a magical Forest School and a separate adventure playground, providing a stimulating environment where children can explore and learn.

Weekly timetabled sessions in our dedicated Forest School and impressive outdoor learning spaces are integral to our curriculum, establishing a deep connection with nature and an appreciation for the environment.

Co-curricular opportunities at RGS Dodderhill add an extra dimension to your child's education. With a wide range of activities from horse riding and watersports to coding, dance, and art, there is something to spark every child's interest and passion.

Our dedicated performing arts studio, music room, and art facilities allow pupils to excel in the arts, with leading drama productions performed each year, demonstrating the talents and creativity of our pupils.

Whilst the school keeps the pupils at the heart of everything, it also does its best to support parents and carers. Wrap-around care is offered from 7.45am to 6pm for those that need it with homework and breakfast club there to help busy families.

Choosing RGS Dodderhill means joining an individual and inclusive community that nurtures while thinking big.

We are ambitious for your child, encouraging confidence, inner determination, and self-esteem. Start your child's educational journey with us.

RGS DODDERHILL

RGS DODDERHILL

Leading Independent School in Droitwich Spa

Open Morning
Saturday 5 October

Prep School for boys and girls aged 2-11
Senior School for girls aged 11-16

To book your place please scan the QR code

SCAN ME

SHORTLIST 2024 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

THE RGS WORCESTER FAMILY OF SCHOOLS
www.rgsw.org.uk

KING'S STUDENTS EXCEL

It was a time for celebration at King's Worcester this summer when sixth form students received their exceptional 2024 A-Level results.

Outstanding achievements: Students celebrate their fantastic A-level results at King's Worcester.

KING'S Worcester's Sixth Formers have recently celebrated exceptional A-level results, with over 75% of grades at A*-B, and 46% at A* or A. Notably, more than 90% of grades were A*-C, with strong performances in Maths, Further Maths, and Physics.

Special recognition goes to 34 students who achieved all A* or A grades, including George Campbell-Ferguson, George Howard, and Lucy Wadley, who are heading to Oxford and Cambridge to study Engineering, Economics, and Geography, respectively.

Overall, more than 92% of students secured their firm or insurance university places, with many pursuing fields such as Engineering, Economics, Medicine, and Architecture at top institutions like Cardiff, Durham, and Exeter. Six students met their Oxbridge offers, seven secured places for Medicine, and seven for Architecture.

Several students also earned spots on prestigious degree apprenticeship programs, gaining valuable work experience. Deputy Head Academic, Katie Beever, praised the students' determination and ambition, highlighting the unwavering support of the teaching staff.

It has been a successful year for King's, after they received a raft of accolades, ranking in The Sunday Times Top 10 in the West Midlands for academic results, top 30 in the UK for sport, top 8 in the Good Schools Guide for rowing and the more recent shortlisting for the Independent School of the Year Award.

Discover more at their forthcoming Open Morning on Saturday 28th September.
Register your visit at www.ksw.org.uk/shapeyourfuture.

King's Worcester

"A school with heart and soul, and a strong sense of community."
GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

SHORTLIST 2024
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

SHAPE YOUR FUTURE AT KING'S

We believe that education is more than just imparting knowledge; it's about shaping the whole person. At King's, we prepare our pupils so that they're ready for a world of exciting opportunities.

Come to an Open Morning to discover more.

#SHAPEYOURFUTURE

OPEN MORNINGS

SENIOR & SIXTH FORM
SATURDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER

HAWFORD PREP
FRIDAY 4TH OCTOBER

ST ALBAN'S PREP
FRIDAY 11TH OCTOBER

DISCOVER MORE
KSW.ORG.UK/SHAPEYOURFUTURE

INDEPENDENT CO-ED DAY SCHOOLS FOR AGES 2-18

Time to shine

Birmingham Academy produces star students including West End stars, a BRIT award nominee, and a BAFTA and OSCAR winning director

BOA Creative, Digital, and Performing Arts Academy are looking for their new cohort of students.

BOA Creative, Digital & Performing Arts offers a world class creative education like no other for young people aged 14 - 19 in Birmingham and the West Midlands. It provides practical technical training, and delivers real world, employment-ready experience.

Students that attend specialise in a creative pathway. The pathways students can choose from are Acting, Dance, Games Design & New Media, Music, Music Technology, Musical Theatre and Visual Art & Design. Alongside their creative pathway, students study GCSEs and have the option to study additional A Levels at post-16.

Places to study are offered following participation in a series of workshops, designed to assess your aptitude for your preferred specialism.

If you have the raw talent - no matter your previous experience - there is a strong chance that BOA is for you.

Whilst studying with us, students have the opportunity to perform in the local, national and international creative arts community.

Successful students can pursue varied careers from BOA, whether on stage or in any supporting role in the creative industries; many take their creativity into new realms, often through university for the wider benefit of society.

Alumni of BOA include West End stars, a BRIT award nominee, and a BAFTA and OSCAR winning director.

Applications for September 2025 will open from Tuesday 1st October 2024 for Year 10 and Year 12.

BOA
CREATIVE, DIGITAL & PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY

OPEN EVENINGS

YEAR 10 TUESDAY 15TH OCTOBER

YEAR 12 THURSDAY 17TH OCTOBER

5.30PM TO 8.30PM

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY · DANCE PERFORMANCE · ACTING PERFORMANCE · MUSIC PERFORMANCE

BOOK NOW AT WWW.BOA-ACADEMY.CO.UK

Create your future

TV, Film and Theatre Production students surge into the Midlands creative industries

BOA Stage & Screen Production Academy provides an industry-focused approach to developing the skills and experience of young people who are passionate about working in film TV, online and theatre production.

The creative industries generate £108 billion a year and employ over 2.3 million people nationally.

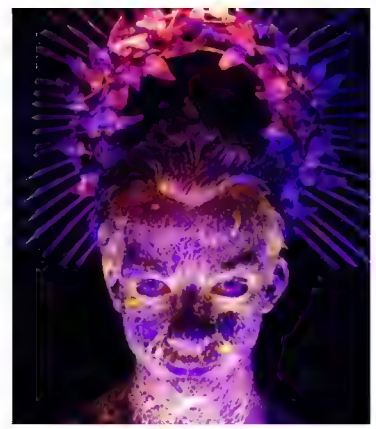
As technological advances continue and more production companies moving to the Midlands, students at BOA Stage and Screen will help bridge the skills shortage in the production industry, both in Birmingham and further afield.

The academy is for post 16 students from Birmingham and the wider area who are looking for the best qualifications, up-to-date practical training, and first-hand experience, which can propel the first steps to a career in tandem with a traditional academic 6th form education.

We also offer a Level 4 Professional Diploma allows students to work with real clients and production companies in the creative industries across Birmingham.

At all levels, students embrace and create real world projects where they can lead the way and learn directly first-hand from the best in the industry.

Students will be well prepared to pursue careers in film, television, video, sound, experience (VR, AR, 360), visual communication, digital media, marketing & promotion, live media events, and other technical media-related disciplines.



Places for BOA Stage and Screen will be awarded via practical aptitude workshop in a chosen pathway.

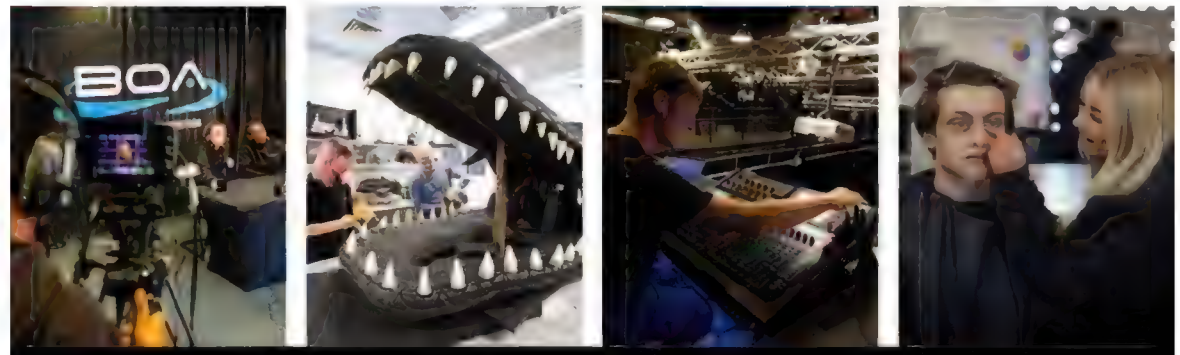
Applications for September 2025 will open from Monday 2nd September 2024.

SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

BOA
STAGE & SCREEN PRODUCTION ACADEMY

WEDNESDAY 9TH OCTOBER
6PM TO 8.30PM

TRAIN BACKSTAGE



WANT TO TRAIN IN TV, FILM AND THEATRE?

BOOK NOW

WWW.TRAINBACKSTAGE.COM

Advertisement Feature

PRESCRIBING SUPPORT

Sarah Rees reports on the Stretton family, whose charitable legacy continues to support local medical students with bursaries as they train to become doctors.

A legacy of compassion and innovation from three remarkable Victorian and Edwardian doctors and surgeons is now helping to fuel the dreams of the next generation of medical professionals.

The John Weston Stretton of Kidderminster charity provides bursaries for students from the counties of Worcestershire or West Midlands who are studying medicine at Cambridge University, Barts & The London School of Medicine, or the Three Counties Medical School, Worcester.

The three surgeons of the Stretton family - Samuel, Lionel, and John - dominated the medical history of Kidderminster from 1856 until John's death in 1952. All three were trained at Cambridge University and St Barts Hospital London.

Samuel, the founder of the dynasty, came to Kidderminster in 1856 after serving in the Crimean War. He seized the challenge of treating the poor in the workhouse and lobbied for the new water works in the town, resulting in significant environmental improvements.

Lionel Stretton, the son of Samuel, returned to Kidderminster in 1882 after qualification at St Bart's hospital, to assist his father as medical officer in the workhouse. He became President of the Infirmary and during his 56 years working in Kidderminster undertook over 40,000 operations. He gained national recognition for introducing 'tincture of iodine' as a powerful weapon for surgeons to combat infection.

John Weston Stretton, the son of Lionel, was educated at Cambridge University and completed his training as a surgeon in 1921, when he returned to Kidderminster.

From then until his death he was a member the medical staff at the Infirmary and was responsible for pioneering radium treatment in the town to treat cancer patients.

Three generations (from left): The Stretton family surgeons; Samuel, Lionel and John.

The John Weston Stretton of Kidderminster charity was set up on 30th May 2013 under the terms of the will of Antony John Stretton, the son of John Weston, grandson of Lionel and great grandson of Samuel.

Since 2013, the charity has financially supported around 70 medical students.

Dr Tamara Enthoven, from Worcester, graduated from Barts & The London School of Medicine in July 2024 and is now a Foundation Year 1 Resident Doctor at Hereford County Hospital. She received £18,000 of funding from the charity between 2019 and 2024.

She said: "The application process was very easy, only one form each year and just a confirmation from the medical school that I was a student in the respective year.

"The funding helped me in endless ways – from using it towards my rent to paying for books, food and travel expenses living in London!

"I feel so lucky to have discovered the John Weston Stretton charity and will be forever grateful for the money I received."

Applications for bursaries are considered at meetings of the Charity trustees.

The next meeting will take place on 23rd September and successful applicants will receive funding shortly after.

Dr Tamara Enthoven: A recipient of the charity's funding.

Once approved, annual funding is available throughout your medical studies, subject to the charity's re-application process supported by a certificate of attendance from your educational establishment.

TO APPLY FOR A BURSARY VISIT JOHNWESTONSTRETTON.ORG.UK

Or you can use the QR code (left) to access the application form directly.

BROMSGROVE SCHOOL
Senior • Preparatory • Pre-Preparatory & Nursery

FLAIR
DISCIPLINE
ACADEMIC RIGOUR

OPEN MORNINGS

Pre-Preparatory & Nursery, ages 2 to 7: **Saturday 28th September**
Preparatory, Year 3 to Year 8: **Saturday 21st September**
Senior School 13+: **Saturday 5th October**
Sixth Form: **Saturday 12th October**

Individual Visits Welcome

Senior 1090 pupils aged 13-18 • Prep 520 pupils aged 7- 13 • Pre-Prep 200 pupils aged 2 - 7

For more information please contact Admissions:
01527 579 679 admissions@bromsgrove-school.co.uk
bromsgrove-school.co.uk

THE WINTERFOLD WAY

WINTERFOLD House is an award-winning prep school, located in 40 acres of beautiful grounds, surrounded by traditional English countryside. The sweeping landscape of well-tended lawns, sports pitches and gardens allow children the freedom and scope to thrive, whether at work or play.

Pupils aged 2 to 13 are inspired to achieve their best. Winterfold's exciting curriculum, dynamic staff and state-of-the-art facilities encourage children to embrace every opportunity.

At Winterfold, every pupil and their family matters. Staff care very much about the children's wellbeing, as well as their academic, personal progress and development.

Every child is given the opportunity to develop and grow in a happy environment.

Winterfold belongs to the Bromsgrove family of schools and places great emphasis on developing self-confidence and a love of learning.

Pupils are encouraged to become more independent and responsible as they progress through the School to prepare them for the challenges of senior school and beyond.

A caring school for pupils to thrive in.

Children leave Winterfold as well-rounded individuals and fine citizens in the making.

Winterfold children love coming to School; they are proud of their achievements and keen to add their successes to Winterfold's impressive heritage.

Join us at our Open Morning on Friday 20th September to discover more about the amazing opportunities that exist at Winterfold.

RR
Diagnostic Dyslexia Assessments

RR Dyslexia Assessments provides dyslexia screening, assessment and diagnosis to children aged 7 -16.

Assessments provided by a qualified teacher and SENDCO.

For more information, email:
RRDyslexiaAssessment@gmail.com

Conexus
Tuition
Rubery & Rednal, Bromsgrove North, Bournville & West Heath

Claire Woodhead
Principal Director

Classes:
Mondays: Barnt Green (KS2, KS3, 11 Plus and GCSE)
Tuesdays: Rednal (KS2, KS3, 11 Plus and GCSE)
Wednesdays: Bournville (KS2)
Please contact Claire (qualified and experienced teacher) to discuss any other requirements.

07359 156634
claire@conexustuition.co.uk
www.conexustuition.co.uk

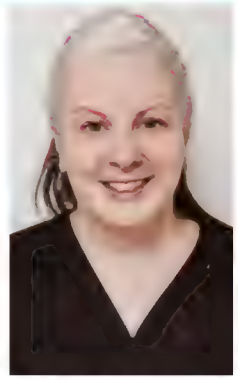
For upcoming open days and more information from independent schools, keep an eye on *The Village*, where you'll often find news and features about the schools in the area.

If you work in education or the enrichment of young people, and would like to reach *Village* readers across the area, get in touch for a chat and we'll let you know how we can help. Send us an email: fran@villageonline.co.uk

Consult the skin experts

millhouse clinics
ALVECHURCH

Laser Specialist: Michelle Burke.



Nurse Prescriber: Sharon Hynes.

MILLHOUSE Clinics warmly invites you to a free consultation to discuss your skincare, laser and aesthetics requirements with our friendly and highly skilled specialists.

We offer a wide range of treatments in our beautiful clinic in the centre of Alvechurch.

We have a number of state-of-the-art lasers including Clear Lfit, Clear Skin and i-pixel to combat a variety of issues, including:

- Hair removal
- Acne
- Scars (including acne scarring)
- Rosacea
- Pigmentation, Melasma
- Skin tightening

Our expert practitioners are skilled in providing clients with outstanding care and relaxing, rejuvenating treatments incldluing:

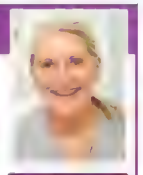
- Obagi, Oxygen and HydraFacial facials
- Microdermabrasion
- Chemical Peels
- Skincare products from Obagi

Our in-house Nurse Prescriber, Sharon, has 14 years experience working in aesthetics and can advice on all your injectable treatments. Whatever your needs, our experts will be able to help at a free consultation. Book your appointment today.

CLINIC OPENING TIMES
Monday - Closed
Tuesday - 10am – 6pm
Wednesday - 10am – 8pm
Thursday - 10am – 8pm
Friday - 9am – 6pm
Saturday - 9am – 5pm
Sunday - Closed

MILLHOUSE CLINICS
The Mill, Alvechurch, B48 7LD
Get in touch with us today:
Call: 0121 493 6906
Instagram: @millhouseclinics
Email: info@millhouseclinicsalvechurch.com

NR Aesthetics & Skin



Nicky Robinson is a NMC registered Nurse & Midwife Prescriber providing Anti-wrinkle Treatments, Dermal fillers, IPRF Hair regeneration, Obagi Medical skincare, Microneedling, Profhilo skin boosters, Polynucleotides and Cryotherapy

Regulated by CareQuality Commission

Call: 07843 047688
Social media: @nraestheticsandskin
Visit: www.nraestheticsandskin.co.uk
Email: info@nraestheticsandskin.co.uk

- British Association of Cosmetic Nurses
- Accredited Save Face practitioner
- CQC registered
- Member of CMAC

Luvatips
NAILS AND BEAUTY

A friendly and relaxed salon in **Colton Hackett**, we offer only the very best in products, treatments and customer service.

- Gel manicure
- Waxing
- Massage
- Facials
- Lash treatments
- Brow treatments
- IPL hair removal
- CACI treatments

THE WEDDING ISSUE

We'll be bringing back our wedding special issue in February 2025. If you're planning a wedding, keep an eye out for some fantastic local businesses and supplies. If you have a business in the wedding industry, and would like to be featured, get in touch with us for a chat today.

Email: fran@villageonline.co.uk
Call: 07536 987950

If you would like to advertise your health and beauty business in *TheVillage*, please email: fran@villageonline.co.uk

A NEW SMILE AT ACORN

Acorn Dental, Barnt Green, introduces the newest member of their team, **Dr Chirag Patel**, who is dedicated to transforming beautiful smiles with his award-winning skills along with Acorn Dental's renowned high quality care.

acorn DENTAL | Barnt Green

At **Acorn Dental** Barnt Green we are pleased to introduce our new dentist, Dr Chirag Patel. He will be a wonderful addition to our multiple award-winning practice.

Along with his skills in cosmetic dentistry he will be blending this with family dentistry for the whole community.

Chirag or "Chiggs" as he is commonly known, graduated from the University of Liverpool in 2014. As a student he won an array of awards related to his interests in dentistry which restores a patient's ability to eat, whilst looking aesthetically beautiful. Realising the positive impact he could have on his community through artistry, education and quality dentistry, Chiggs sought additional training from the very best mentors in the UK.

After completing his foundation year in Heswall, he moved back to his family home in Wolverhampton for his mum's good food, and to work as a Senior House Officer at Birmingham community services and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Here, he diversified his skills, assisting patients with additional needs, anxiety, trauma and cancer.

His love for the city of Liverpool meant that very soon, he was back in the North-West, where he perfected the art of creating confident smiles.

Chiggs has worked in high-level private practice ever since and has completed hundreds of smile-makeovers using techniques which mean as much natural tooth-tissue is preserved.

Chiggs achieves confident smiles in a minimally-invasive way using treatments such as tooth-straightening, whitening, composite bonding and porcelain veneers. Often he talks about his "ABC" technique which means "Alignment, Bleach and Composite bond".

His dedication to his community and quality craftmanship was recognised at the Private Dentistry Awards, where he won "Best Young Dentist Northwest 2022". He loved the recognition he received on the night, but says he loved the pride on his parents' faces, and the dancing so much more.

He has now moved back to the Midlands to be closer to his parents, and to share the knowledge and skills he has crafted over the last 10 years.

Chiggs ensures he stays on top of the very latest techniques to improve the quality of the care he provides for his patients, and is currently in his final year of a Master's degree at the King's College London, studying Smile Rehabilitation using Crowns, Bridges, Veneers, Composite, Implants and Dentures.

Dr Chirag Patel joins the multiple award-winning practice.

Outside of dentistry, Chiggs has a passion for cooking and wishes to write a cookbook in honour of his Mum's recipes some day.

You can learn more about Chiggs on Instagram **@dr.chiggs** (his Instagram reels are always showing F1, travel, teeth, kittens, food and photography).

If you would like an appointment with Chiggs, you can either call the practice on 0121 447 7300 or book online through our website at www.acorndental.co.uk and click on the Barnt Green button

****OFFER****
Free consultation with Chiggs. Only 10 appointments available. Quote code *Chiggs24*

SMILE AWARDS2012 WINNER
Aesthetic Dentistry Awards 2015 Winner
Private Dentistry Awards2017 WINNER Best Young Dentist South
Aesthetic Dentistry Awards 2018 WINNER Best Aesthetic Dentist 2018

The Village Directory

To get your business or service noticed,
call **07536 987950** *or email* **sales@villageonline.co.uk**

C & M DECORATORS

FATHER & SON

- Interior & Exterior
- 36 Years' Experience
- Free Quotes ◆ Fully Insured

Based in Lickey End, Bromsgrove

Tel: 01527 576136 or 07850 380162

Checkatrade.com
10% OFF ALL ROOF WORK

WEATHERGUARD Roofing Professionals

Specialists in all types of Roofing, Complete Roofs, Ridge Tiles, Lead Work, Chimneys, Fascias, Soffits, Guttering, Gutter Cleaning

Call 01527 962972 / 07467 159012
www.weatherguardservices.co.uk
info@weatherguardservices.co.uk

A.S. PAINTING & DECORATING

For all your decorating needs
contact Alan
on 07730 477564
Cleanliness Assured ● Free Quotes

AS TIME GOES BY

MEMORIALS THAT REFLECT A LIFETIME
Supplier of Headstones & Cremation Tablets

KEVIN PORTER
T: 01527 550505 / 07835 523840
E: kfporter@blueyonder.co.uk
W: www.astimegoesby.org.uk
Unit 5, Dunlop Rd, Hunt End Industrial Estate, Redditch B97 5XP. Home visits available

---

R.C. Carpentry & Joinery

Bespoke fitted furniture
Media walls, Alcove units, Kitchens, Doors, Flooring
Mobile: 07875 058788
Email: richard.rccarpentry@gmail.com
rc.carpentry

LogCo .co

Kiln-dried firewood & bags of smokeless coal ovals. Free delivery.

Coopers Hill Farm, Alvechurch B48 7BX
0121 447 7313 logs@logco.co

Painter & Decorator

All aspects covered

Steve Wills
07948 605 506
0121 624 2281
stevewills1971@hotmail.com

---

flame2flame

Local installers and maintainers of wood and multi-fuel burning stoves. Full design and installation service. Please contact us for a quote.

Call: 07398 123 969
Email: hello@flame2flame.co.uk

Wainwright's

CARPET & UPHOLSTERY Cleaning
CLEANER • DRIER • CARPETS

FAMILY RUN SINCE 1980

CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING SPECIALISTS
ECO FRIENDLY
DOMESTIC & COMMERCIAL

Which? Trusted Trader
ncca

www.wainwrightscarpetcleaning.co.uk

SENIOR COMPANIONSHIP & CONCIERGE

We are not a care service, our discreet companion and concierge services allow us to provide assistance beyond the reach of conventional care providers, helping you keep hold of your independence.

Call or email for a chat today.

0774 703 0014
enquiries@bettertogetherservices.co.uk
Better Together

On track computers Ltd

Which? Trusted Trader

computer engineers • you can trust

Mike Nash - Qualified - Local - Friendly

Mobile Computer Engineer – will visit your Home or Office

■ Virus & Spyware Removal ■ Wireless Broadband Set Up/Repair ■ All Computer Hardware Repair ■ Laptop Screen Replacement

Tel: 0121 445 2065
Email: helpme@ontrackcomputers.co.uk
www.ontrackcomputers.co.uk
Serving Barnt Green & surrounding areas for over 15 years

We now install composite doors

ACS INTERIOR DOORS

We now install composite doors

Beautiful Interior Doors Supplied and Fitted

Please visit our new showroom in Studley.
Unit 1
Ground Floor
Haydon House
Alcester Road
Studley
B80 7AN

www.acsinteriordoors.co.uk
07592 303104 or 07910 289565

S4F SPOOKTACULAR!

PRIVATE HALLOWEEN LASER TAG PARTIES IN OUR HAUNTED WOODS!
FOR KIDS & ADULTS

CONTACT MARK
01527 575141
mark@shooting4fun.co.uk

S4F, Oaklands Outdoor Activity Centre, Hanbury B60 4HS

Roberts Bespoke Joinery

FURNITURE & TRADITIONAL JOINERY

- Hand-made kitchens
- Free-standing and fitted furniture
- Specialist joinery
- Design and fitting service

The Workshop, 3 Bear Hill, Alvechurch B48 7JX
Tel: 0121 447 8017
www.robertsbespokejoinery.co.uk

Village Directory

www.chrischipps.co.uk

TIMBER BESPOKE WINDOWS

For the future

K5 Installations

Kevin Smith

- Plumbing & Heating Services
- Boiler Replacement
- Bathrooms
- Service & Repair
- Pipework Design & Installation
- Domestic, Commercial & Industrial

Tel: 0121 445 5636
Mobile: 07813 188806

Which? Trusted trader | Worcester Bosch Group Worcester boiler accredited installer | safe

---

CTB ALARMS LTD

YOUR LOCAL ALARM COMPANY

- Alarm Installations • Alarm repairs
- Alarm system servicing
- Upgrade/Modernisation of alarms

24/7 response • 25+ years experience

t: 0121 716 7375
e: sales@ctbalarms.co.uk w: www.ctbalarms.co.uk

Checkatrade | Texecom & Honeywell approved

Pledger Electrical Services

TRUST MARK | LOCAL ELECTRICIAN | NAPIT Part P Registered Installer

- Installations • Maintenance & Repair
- Inspection & Testings • Reliable Service

Call Dean: 0121 445 1601 or 07891 498909

City & Guilds Qualified

LICKEY CARPENTRY & CONSTRUCTION

Roofing, Floors, Kitchens, Doors, 1st & 2nd Fix
New Build, Extensions & Refurbishment
Domestic, Commercial and Schoolwork
CRB Checked & Fully Insured
Shop Fronts & Glazing
Dependable & Quality Service

Contact Paul on 07961 342304 / 0121 445 6236
e-mail:lickeycarpentry@hotmail.co.uk www.lickeycarpentry.co.uk
15 Cofton Lake Road, Birmingham B45 8PL

QF | T.S. Electrical | NICEIC

Domestic & Commercial
Property/Landlord Inspections
Full & Part Rewires • Fuse Board Replacements
Alarms Fitted • PAT Testing • Part P Certified

TRUST MARK

01564 823882 / 07974 829794
Lilley Green Road, Alvechurch

D.J.SCRIVEN ROOFING CONTRACTOR

DAVID JAMES SCRIVEN - ROOFER

TILE / SLATE / LEAD / TRADITIONAL ROOFING
NO JOB TOO SMALL - FREE QUOTATIONS

160 SIR HILTONS ROAD, BIRMINGHAM B31 3NW
TEL: 0121 291 9452 07845 268 841 07841 684 547
Email: scrivenroofing@gmail.com
Facebook: DJScriven Roofing Contractor

Elite Sweeps

Professional Chimney Sweep & HETAS Stove Installer

HETAS | FIRE KILLS

- Prompt, reliable and friendly service
- Cowls and Chimney Pots fitted
- Fully qualified and fully insured
- Guild certificates issued after every sweep

Call Eddie: 01527 962555 / 07712 220671
www.elitesweeps.co.uk

CORNELL

Established Over 40 Years

Chimney Sweep

☑ Clean & Efficient ☑ Brush & Vacuum

Graeme Butlin

0121 445 5913 - 0754 587 6475

46 Oxford Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9ER

---

newtonbathrooms

PROFESSIONAL BATHROOM INSTALLATIONS

- Plumbing
- Plastering
- Tiling
- Carpentry
- Vinyl/Laminate Fitting
- Fully Insured

Phil Newton

t. 0800 310 2720
m. 07900 925 651

w. www.newtonbathrooms.co.uk e. sales@newtonbathrooms.co.uk

ClassicCarpentry

Friendly Service, Free Estimates, Quality Work

All Internal & External Carpentry Insurance Work Undertaken

Dave Terry
0121 445 1574 or 07970 966470
www.classic-carpentry.co.uk
classiccarpentry@hotmail.co.uk

Morgan plumbing and heating ltd

Lloyd Morgan
07789 622453
0121 445 6441
morganplumbingandheating.co.uk

City & Guilds Fully Qualified Plumber

GET A FREE NO OBLIGATION QUOTE TODAY

SJ PAINTING & DECORATING

15 YEARS EXPERIENCE | INTERNAL TO EXTERNAL | ALL DECORATING UNDERTAKEN

07834 551921

sjpaintinganddecorating | sjpaintinganddecorating | sjpaintinganddecorating@gmail.com

---

Windmill Hill Care

Domiciliary Care & Support Services
Consultants to the Care Industry

Independent home care agency owned and run by an experienced Registered Nurse

Traditional, bespoke, person-centred care

Safe, caring, effective, responsive and well-led

Registered with the Care Quality Commission

Contact Jackie Grant on
0121 448 3348
jackie@windmill-hill-care.co.uk
www.windmill-hill-care.co.uk

Protect your loved ones by making a Will today

Sue Jenden Associates

- Specialists in Wills, Trusts, inheritance tax planning, and administration of estates
- Affiliate member of the Society of Trust & Estate Practitioners
- Meetings in your own home
- Based in Lickey • Fixed fees

Tel: 0121 445 5874
info@suejendenassociates.co.uk
www.suejendenassociates.co.uk

APPROVED CODE | Institute of Professional Willwriters

This firm complies with the IPW Code of Conduct

DO YOU HAVE A SPOOKY STORY TO SHARE?

We love hearing your chilling stories and unexplained encounters.
In our October issue we will be sharing more of our ghost stories from the area- we'd love to hear some new ones.
Send us your creepy tales by 15 September and we'll put the best ones in the next issue of *The Village*.

Email: fran@villageonline.co.uk
Call: 07536 987950

TheVillage

is hand-delivered to 10,000 homes across this lovely area.
To reach our very large audience email or call us on: 07536 987950

ppm financial planning
ppmfinancialplanning.com

We love answering this question:
"Am I going to be ok?"

Meet the Team

When you become a client at PPM Financial Planning you do not just acquire an adviser, but a team of professionals who all know your story and have their own integral part to play in bringing it to life

Martin Pryor
Financial Planner & Adviser

Nicky Lowndes
General Manager

Laura Siddall
Financial Planner & Adviser

Laura Daniels
Mortgage Adviser

Louise Wheeler
Paraplanner

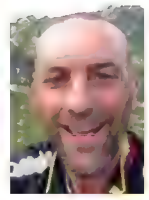
Jodie Morey
Office Administrator

Mitchell Thomas
Graduate Trainee Financial Advisor

ppm financial planning

PPM Financial Planning
Lifestyle & Financial Planning | Financial Advice
Pensions | Investments | Tax | Protection
Head Office: The Needle Factory, British Mills, Albert Street, Redditch B97 4DA
Tel: 0121 445 5694 **Email:** enquiries@ppmfinancialplanning.com
Web: www.ppmfinancialplanning.com
Registered as a Limited Company in England and Wales No. 05839628
PPM Financial Planning is a trading name of Pryor Portfolio Management Ltd who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.
Pryor Portfolio Management Ltd Financial Services Register Number is 511176.

FINANCIAL PLANNING IN 'EASY MODE'



Martin Pryor explains, in gaming terms, the benefits of switching from default mode when managing your finances and how PPM can help you play to win.

IN video games, "Easy Mode" is a popular setting that makes the gaming experience more accessible and less challenging for players.

When you play in this mode, the game automatically adjusts various elements to make your journey smoother and more manageable.

Enemies become weaker, resources are more abundant, and the consequences of making mistakes are less severe. This allows players to enjoy the game at a pace that suits their skill level without feeling overwhelmed or frustrated.

Like gaming, many people find the world of finance and investing intimidating and complex.

In the following sections, we'll explore how applying "Easy mode" strategies to financial planning can help you manage your finances more effectively and achieve your goals.

THE CHALLENGES FINANCIAL PLANNING ON DEFAULT MODE

Financial planning can be daunting and complex. Many investors are overwhelmed by the sheer amount of financial information, investment options, and ever-changing market conditions.

This complexity often leads to pitfalls and obstacles, such as short-term thinking, emotional decision-making, and a lack of a clear, long-term financial plan.

Operating in this mode can take a significant emotional toll. The constant stress and anxiety of making the right financial choices can leave individuals feeling paralysed and unsure of how to proceed.

The lack of a clear plan can also increase the risk of financial setbacks and losses, further compounding the emotional stress of investing.

Recognising the limitations of the default mode approach is the first step towards finding a better way to manage your finances.

We firmly believe that the best way to increase the probability of success is to embrace simplicity, not complexity. While this can be difficult for wealthy investors to accept, we've seen the benefits first-hand.

SWITCHING TO EASY MODE

Transitioning from financial planning's default mode to "Easy mode" can bring a sense of relief and empowerment to your financial journey. Like in gaming, "Easy mode" in financial planning makes enemies weaker, resources more abundant, and the consequences of mistakes less severe.

One of our biggest enemies in the financial planning journey is the constant media noise surrounding us.

Regularly consuming news about short-term market movements and recent world events does not set us up for making smart long-term decisions.

Smart investors know that success is more likely if they remain focused on the long term, which is easier when they are mindful of what information they consume.

Financial planning is the quest to accumulate enough resources for a dignified and independent retirement. Smart investors understand what asset classes give them the best chance of growing their resources and fighting inflation.

They know that by diversifying within the right asset classes, they can put the odds of success in their favour.

Lastly, many investors undo the effects of their previous good decisions by making emotional decisions during times of heightened uncertainty, such as short-term world events.

Smart investors understand market history and investment cycles, allowing them to stay focused on the long term when others react emotionally. This is another hallmark of those playing on "easy mode".

HELP ON THE WAY

Embracing "Easy mode" means focusing on long-term, goal-oriented strategies that align with your values. It involves prioritising the essential concepts and actions for your success.

Collaborating with a caring financial adviser can be instrumental on this journey, but the principles of simplicity, clarity, and emotional resilience remain invaluable even if you navigate the journey independently.

We encourage you to remember that the power to transform your financial life lies within your hands. Embrace the simplicity and clarity of the "Easy mode" approach and take confident strides towards a brighter financial future.

We exist to guide families on this path, and we invite you to connect with us if you need help with financial planning in "Easy mode."

Martin Pryor
Lifestyle Financial Planner

For more information, please contact us
Tel: 07961 162818
martinpryor@ppmfinancialplanning.com
www.ppmfinancialplanning.com

This article should not be regarded as personal advice. You should seek independent financial advice to apply these theories to your circumstances.

The anonymous birder

How to enjoy village birdlife

MY HOLIDAY VIEWING

IN classic "back to school" mode, this month is a birding nod to "What I did (or in this case, saw) on my Holidays".

Trips away usually provide a different habitat and therefore their own set of particular resident birds or those passing through. An ideal opportunity to spot something new or different.

Often time away may also allow for a little deeper observation of the familiar too.

Obviously on a trip, birdwatching starts in the car – which is effectively a bird hide on wheels. It's also more ideal as a passenger, granted, but the skillful aerobatics of red kites were first to catch my attention.

Now a common bird in certain parts after their reintroduction in the 1980s, these carrion feeders were once plentiful across the country even as city dwellers. They are certainly thriving on the Welsh borders. With a striking plumage and relatively un-bothered by human presence they are always worth a few minutes to take in.

Once we reached Aberdovey on the Dovey estuary, the dominant bird of the week was undoubtedly the Herring Gull with its archetypal "seagull" call.

They're the ones with pearly light grey wings and pasty little pink legs. They must be one of the most vocal and loud birds we have and they communicate continuously even though the breeding season has passed.

All the calls I discussed in a previous issue of *The Village* are essential to maintain the social structure of the long lived pairs (up to 20 years with the same partner) in their colonies.

Whether it is the excitement of a new day or the thought of all that kleptoparasitism (nicking food) ahead, they go crackers at first light and keep up the vocalisations and physical posturing – all with their own meaning – until they fall exhausted into the night time roost.

Earplugs recommended if staying in seaside towns.

Amongst their many quirks - we saw one swallow an individual butter wrapper whole outside a cafe in Aberystwyth – the male's highest form of admiration when choosing a partner is to regurgitate a meal for her.

Possibly unsurprisingly it is not uncommon in herring gulls for females to pair up to brood eggs.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the gull colonies, we took a trip to Ynis-Hir RSPB one afternoon.

In mid to late summer it feels like many birds "disappear". Breeding is over and birds are replacing their plumage and generally recovering from the efforts of brood raising so keep a low profile.

Mid-afternoon is also quieter than morning and evening when birds are more active, apart from wading birds whose feeding depends the tides.

Lots of dragonflies were on the wing but quiet on the bird front apart from one very noticeable exception; the stonechat.

Not a bird we will see in our area as they prefer heath and duneland. A relative of the robin, they will perch very noticeably on any prominent shoot, twig or branch in order to scan for insects with their relatively large eyes.

It is such a good watch out that other birds in the vicinity will use it as an early warning system if a predator appears. Their breeding call sounds like stones being cracked together hence the name.

Arguably the most memorable birding experience of the week happened about 20 yards from our accommodation.

On the look-out: Stonechats are excellent at watching for predators.

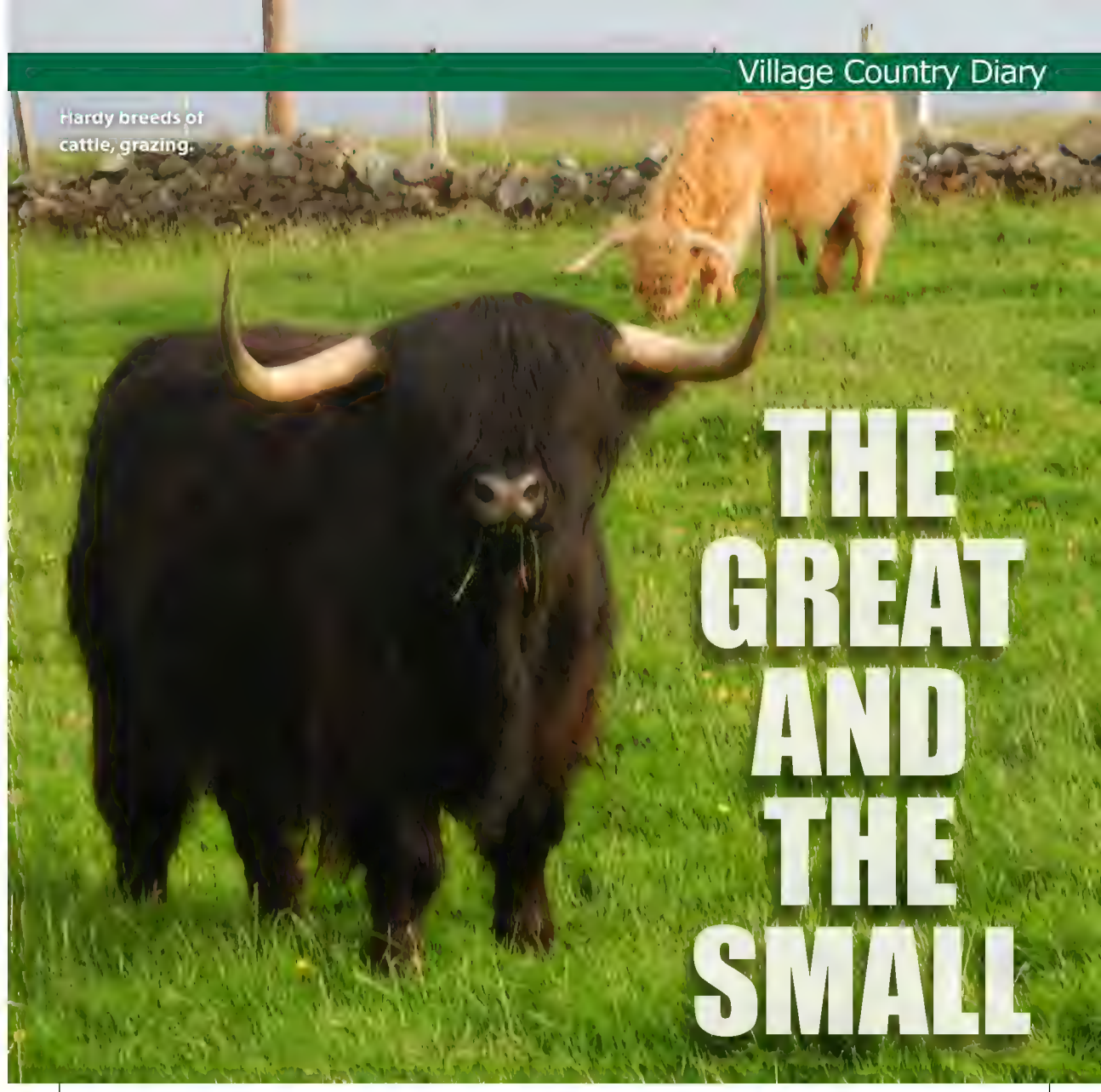
Woken by the church bells opposite and waking gulls I thought I'd go for a 5am walk. As I entered the enclosed churchyard I disturbed a sparrowhawk which was plucking it's prey under the cover of an ancient yew tree out of the way of prying eyes.

It flew off like a gust of wind with breakfast in it's talons. It was obviously a favourite plucking spot as other circles of feathers testified. A rare encounter.

Hopefully you've been away or maybe waiting for the rush to pass, the migration season will be in full swing when you read this. Either way there's always something to see and hear.

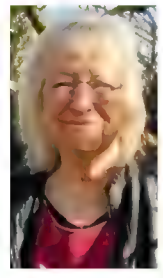
It doesn't have to be full on "bird-watching", bird noticing works just as well.

JL



Hardy breeds of cattle, grazing.

THE GREAT AND THE SMALL



Mary Green takes us through the wildlife we can spot around us in gardens, woodlands, fields, canals and rivers.

I know some people don't like it when I write about not mowing lawns, as I did last month. Of course there are places where close-mown grass/flowers are needed, such as sports fields. But it is worth thinking about why you want a lawn.

Constantly mown grass is virtually useless for biodiversity or to help with climate change, wasteful of energy both human and fuel, so you really need a good reason for it.

Maybe you have children or grandchildren who play on it – mown grass is good for that. Or if you walk on it a lot and don't want to get into wet vegetation – though even then you can probably mow paths or patches.

But only by letting the grass and flowers grow to maturity will you provide a home and food for insects and all the other wildlife that depends on them.

I've met a few people recently who are trying to create "low-mow" lawns – having short plants which can

continues overleaf

continues from previous page

continue to flower if you cut with a high setting to shorten the grasses.

Flowers include camomile, clover, self-heal, daisies and bird's foot trefoil. This can be lovely and insect-friendly but is quite hard to establish – you need patience.

This month I am writing about the section of the animal kingdom that includes us – mammals.

Mammals give birth to live young and suckle them. Although they are some of the creatures we prize more highly and like to see, our encounters with native wild mammals are relatively rare.

In cold winters you can often see their footprints in the snow, You might see mice, rats, voles, moles, shrews, squirrels, weasels & stoats, foxes, badgers, bats, rabbits, hares, deer, hedgehogs and otters.

In other parts of Britain, you might find beavers, pine martens, polecats, wild-cats, boars, seals, whales and dolphins.

Mice are all around us, the most common being the field mouse. We generally like these (outside our houses) and they appear a lot in our children's stories.

There are rarer species like harvest mice and dormice which were once common too. They need more specific habitat than field mice so are disappearing because of more intensive farming and use of pesticides and herbicides. If you put out bird feeders it's not uncommon to see a field mouse on them!

If you do find one in your house and want to get rid of it humanely you have to take it a very long way away, as they are very good at finding their way back to somewhere they have food.

Shrews are quite common, but rarely seen, living in woodland edges, verges and hedges.

Voles can be spotted occasionally but are challenged by our destruction of their habitat.

Water voles are an interesting example. I've seen them in the canal here, and others have too. But they need a soft, indented bank with good long vegetation, so the hard edge and

An acrobatic visitor: Grey squirrel in Hopwood. *Image/Dennis Brown*

mown banks the canal sometimes has don't suit them.

Recently the Canal and Rivers Trust have adapted the way they fill in indented banks to make sure they stay vole friendly. There are good examples between Alvechurch and Shortwood.

Rats are another matter but are a normal part of our biodiversity and have probably had a worse reputation than they deserved. They live alongside humans, scavenging from our resources, so have usually been disliked.

Current science suggests they were not responsible for spreading the Black Death as previously thought, and they perform a useful task in clearing up.

Grey squirrels are the most likely wild animal you see. They live among trees and are very acrobatic, jumping between branches. They eat nuts and acorns but also any other seeds and fruits – and are another rather destructive visitor to bird feeders! They've been shown in experiments to be very clever.

They are important for the spread

Badgers: A larger mammal spotted in the area.

of trees, especially oaks and hazels, taking the nuts away and burying them for later, forgetting some so letting new trees grow away from their parents.

They are not a native species, introduced from the late nineteenth

Night time garden wardens: Hedgehogs often move between gardens. *Image/BHPS*

A field mouse: Visits Mary's bird feeder for a snack.

Mink love hunting on the water: Spotted on the canal.

century, unlike the red squirrel which you won't see round here.

Reds are still fairly common in Scotland and Cumbria and I've seen them on the Isle of Wight. Unfortunately, the grey squirrels have out-competed them in most of England.

Squirrels of both kinds used to be considered pests, and were eaten by people, but this is uncommon now. The reds became more of a "cute" and loved species, while the greys have mixed reactions from humans (my late father used to call them "tree rats" though in his later years he loved watching them in the trees).

There are plenty of attractive squirrels in children's stories, usually reds. For most English people now, grey squirrels are what we have. A few years ago we saw an unusual white (albino) one round here.

Moles too are popular in children's stories, but people don't like them in those mown lawns. Mole catchers used to make a good living getting rid of them.

Nowadays moles are not quite so common and most people realise they are an important part of our network of animals, eating insects and invertebrates which we might think of as pests. And the soil thrown up in molehills makes perfect potting compost!

I occasionally see weasels and stoats, usually as they run from hedge to hedge. Here you're probably more likely to see a mink, an introduced American species which has gone feral on our canals.

Stoats and weasels fit in with our network of animals, but mink don't and can be destructive to native species like water voles.

Smaller mammals are food for the bigger ones, and for many of our birds of prey.

One of the larger mammals which has made a recovery round here is the otter, which feeds largely on fish.

Surveys have found plenty living on our canal, thought they need access to open or running water as well.

When I was young they were still persecuted because it was thought they took fish meant for human food. Now they are seen as an important part of our ecosystem. The number of fish they take is not enough to be a problem as they roam large areas of water. I often meet people who've seen them here – your best bet is dusk or early morning.

These days everyone loves a hedgehog, rather surprisingly as they are prickly and often carry fleas. They too used to be eaten by humans but not much else can get at them!

At one time people believed they caused harm, including sucking the milk from cows. They eat insects, slugs and other invertebrates and do a great clean up job in the garden.

As they are mostly nocturnal many people see them at night in their gardens. We all know now to leave gaps in fences or walls as hedgehogs need to wander freely in search of food.

Rabbits and hares look similar but we have different attitudes to them.

Hares are native and our folklore is full of them, often seeing them as magical creatures. Their mating habits are especially watched, with the female "boxing" with the male to find a worthy partner, and their apparent "mad" behaviour in spring.

They're not common but I do see them in the fields above Alvechurch. They don't burrow but live in "forms" shaped in the grass.

Rabbits were introduced from France as a food species in the Middle Ages (there's no word for them in Old English) and quickly escaped and bred all over the countryside.

They caused problems for arable farmers and were often shot, snared or poisoned.

In my childhood I went with my brother as he caught rabbits by putting his ferrets down rabbit-holes.

We all used to kill them as they ran

continues overleaf

continues from previous page

out of the corn during harvest. We ate them of course.

Despite all this we read books about cute bunnies like everyone else! Then in the 1960s a disease called myxomatosis killed almost all of them. They have come back and are quite common round here.

Badgers are fascinating animals, very recognisable, omnivorously eating insects, tulip bulbs or almost anything else around. They don't harm people or their livelihoods but were for some reason often persecuted, with badger-baiting being a cruel sport. Now they are killed in case they spread tuberculosis to cattle, despite a lack of strong evidence that this works.

They form huge networks of burrows called setts and I know of many round here, especially in and on the edge of woodland. They have regular habits, often foraging at the same time at dusk.

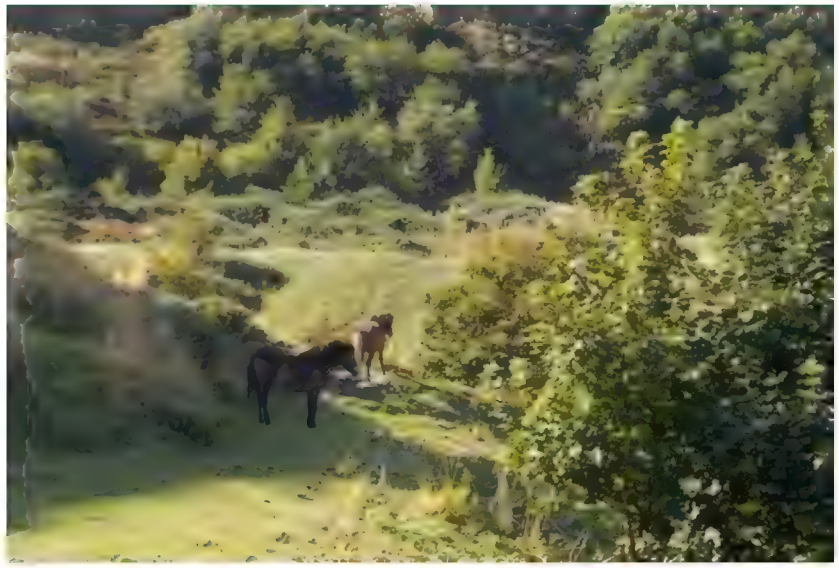
The red fox is another animal we have contradictory views on.

In folklore Mr Fox or Reynard is sometimes a hero, a kind of animal rebel against humans, often outwitting them. But it was also literally hounded to death.

It is an obvious carnivore and I have had friends lose all their chickens to them, but they will eat all kinds of things. They have moved into towns where they are less popular, though people still have a secret love of seeing such a wild creature among them. Perhaps no other animal attracts such admiration and dislike equally.

We have so few large carnivores that I value them as important parts of our ecosystem and I still love to see them here. I live at the bottom of Fox Hill and there are foxes there!

Deer are very much liked (unless they eat your garden) and used to be seen as very noble and romantic animals – at the same time as being hunted and eaten. *Bambi* is perhaps the height of our desire for "cuteness" in animals. They are our last real wild mammal used for food, and you can still get wild venison.



Conservation grazing by horses: To increase and maintain biodiversity.

A natural solution: Vole-friendly bank restoration.

Whose footprints?: Mammal tracks left in the snow.

Standing proud: Highland red deer.

Since we don't have carnivores big enough to kill deer, they can become too many in some areas and are usually culled, so eating them is a good way of keeping the balance. Round here we see native roe deer and the introduced muntjac.

Then there are the flying mammals – the bats. Most people these days know how important they are as a sign of our biodiversity, though at one time they were feared because of their strange nocturnal habits.

This year specialists are really worried about bat survival as there is such a lack of insects, which they eat huge numbers of.

I see the most common bat -the pipistrelle – here, especially feeding on midges over the canal at dusk. There are the less common Daubenton's bats over the reservoirs at Bittell too – our human-made water environments here are good for them.

The mammals you are most likely to see every day are not native wild ones but domesticated ones – farmed cattle, horses and sheep, and pet dogs and cats.

I'm afraid pet dogs and cats don't contribute much to biodiversity though working cats and dogs have helped in past years when the numbers of smaller mammals like mice, rats and rabbits became a problem.

We used to have wild cattle and horses grazing our flower-rich grasslands which are an important habitat for so much of our wildlife.

Now we don't have them, we need our farm cattle and other grazers to keep these habitats thriving as meadows and pastures.

Cattle, especially hardy breeds like Longhorns, are really valuable at maintaining healthy flower-rich grasslands. Their way of eating means they don't take too much off the plants.

But all grazing animals need huge spaces. moving from field to field. So much land is over-grazed – just as our lawns are over-mowed!

■ **This (right) is a poem I wrote at one of the Picnics in the Park with details given me by the local hedgehog group.**

Village Country Diary

Longhorn cattle: Grazing in fields, while a calf suckles milk from its mother.

Hedgehog

I am huffing my way into your garden. Thanks for the gap.
This food is strange, made for cat-hogs, but I like it.
Much more I like snails slugs grubs earwigs – mmm.
You man-hogs like it when I eat them. You like me.
But do you know you are my main predator, or
Those cars you drive are? I can live eight years
If not flattened crossing a country road one night.
This garden is mine. I will have no other hogs
Except the she-hogs I circle in the spring
Making a crop circle till we find the bushes
And make some hoglets to carry on my line.
But some are welcome. I like the fox-hogs
My brothers with smooth coats and furry tails -
Though underneath my belly feels as soft -
Night creatures like me. Even our spraint is alike
Though mine is smaller and glittery with skins.
We feed from the same dish, me with my feet
Firmly on it or he will spirit it away.
You like me best. I'm cute, though lord knows why
With my spikes and my dislike of your dog-friends.
You turn me into little old ladies with bonnets
To please your children. But my friend the fox
Is the villain of the piece, the chicken thief.
Love me and fox-hog for what we are. Our fleas do.
For despite your sentimental love, it's me
Who's the endangered one, not him. Let me in
And let me out, let the slugs thrive, and see me as I am.

Photo: Ian Macvie.

Attacking options: Tyrone Barnett leaping for the ball (left) and Dan Sweeney (right) are just two of the strikers manager Jimmy Fry can call on to win games for The Church.

Dan's back in attack

HERE GOES with a new season for Alvechurch FC, aiming for a play-off spot (or better!) and a good hunt for trophies.

After steering The Church out of the relegation zone to safety in the Southern Central league last season, manager Jimmy Fry and his team have made wholesale changes to the squad.

Nine players are retained from last season, including the captain, Josh Dugmore, in defence, and player coach Richard Batchelor in the midfield.

Twelve new players were signed ready for the start of the 2024-25 campaign, including Dan Sweeney, the striker credited with turning around the club's fortunes during a chilly month on loan at the start of this year.

Dan, who has previously turned out for Kidderminster Harriers, Redditch United and Bromsgrove Sporting is signed up for The Church and set to be a regular goal-scorer.

He slotted two home in Alvechurch's first win of this season, coming back from a goal down at home against Bigglewswade Town.

Manager Fry said after the game: "Hopefully, that will kick-start him – he lives for his goals and those two were well-taken."

Two new goalkeepers are in the squad: Charlie Woods, from Northampton Towm, and Kamil Dudek, who is on a three-month loan from League 1 side Burton Albion.

AFC FIXTURES

September

Sat 7th	Hitchin Town (a)	3pm
Mon 9th	Redditch United (a)	7.45
Sat 21st	Stamford Town (h)	3pm
Tue 24th	Stourbridge (h)	7.45
Sat 28th	Anstey Nomads (a)	3.00
	FA Cup 3rd qualifying round	

October

Sat 5th	FA Trophy 3rd qualifying round	
Sat 12th	Leiston (a)	3pm
Tue 15th	AFC Telford Utd (a)	7.45
Sat 19th	St Ives Town (h)	3pm
Tue 22nd	Halesowen Town	7.45
Sat 26th	FA Trophy 1st Round	

In defence, Krystian Pearce brings plenty of experience to the centre-back position after stints with Birmingham City, Huddersfield Town, Notts County and most recently National league side Kidderminster Harriers.

Having impressed last season at local rivals Bromsgrove Sporting, David Salademi has signed to bolster the Alvechurch defence.

Connor Stanley, a former Manchester United youth player, has joined the club from Stourbridge FC, having started at Birmingham City. He has also played in the United States for Atlanta United and Bolton Wanderers.

The midfield is bolstered by Sam Perry, who started his career at Aston Villa u18s, Callum Sullivan, who has been at Birmingham City throughout his career, and Joe Willis, who started his career at Walsall with the u18s.

Then at the front, Tyrone Barnett brings plenty of experience to the squad at centre forward having scored goals at League 1, League 2 and National League level with Eastleigh, Peterborough, Macclesfield, Shrewsbury and Crawley.

Church fans will remember winger Omari Sterling-James, who started his career at Lye Meadow in the 2012/13 season. He has since spent most of his career in the National League with Solihull Moors, Mansfield Town, Kidderminster Harriers and Ebbsfleet before returning to Alvechurch this summer.

Finally, Kieran Wakefield, who has played 30 matches for Birmingham City at u18 and u21 level, has now signed for Alvechurch.

The opening three games of the season saw The Church come away empty handed from just-relegated Bishop Stortford but bagging four home points with a 1-1 draw against Harborough Town before the 2-1 victory over Biggleswade Town.

■ Alvechurch have been drawn away to Evesham Utd in the first round of the Worcestershire FA Senior Cup, a repeat of last season's final, to be played week commencing Oct 7th.

AUTUMN LAWNCARE

Ross Dustan, owner of **Lawnwise**, gives *The Village* his top tips on how to take the best care of and maintain your lawn this year as we enter the cooler autumn months.

AUTUMN is a critical period for lawn care in the UK, offering the perfect opportunity to ensure your lawn remains healthy and robust.

Here are some essential tips to help you maintain your lawn during the autumn season.

1. AERATION

Aeration is a vital step in autumn lawn care. Over time, soil can become compacted, restricting the flow of air, water, and nutrients to the grassroots.

Aerating your lawn involves creating small holes in the soil to alleviate compaction and promote better absorption. You can use a garden fork or a mechanical aerator for this task.

2. SCARIFICATION

Scarification, or dethatching, is the process of removing thatch – a layer of dead grass, moss, and debris that can accumulate on the soil surface. Thatch can prevent essential nutrients and water from reaching the soil.

Using a lawn scarifier or a rake, gently remove the thatch to improve the overall health of your lawn. This process also helps reduce moss growth, which can thrive in damp autumn conditions.

3. OVERSEEDING

After aerating and scarifying, overseeding your lawn can help fill in any bare patches and promote a thicker, healthier turf. Using a high-quality grass seed suitable for your lawn type, spread the seed evenly across the lawn, paying special attention to areas that look thin or worn. Lightly rake the soil to ensure good seed-to-soil contact and water the area thoroughly. Autumn's cooler temperatures and increased rainfall create ideal conditions for seed germination.

4. FEEDING

Feeding your lawn in autumn is crucial to help it withstand the winter months and emerge strong in spring. Use a lawn fertiliser specifically formulated for autumn use, which typically contains higher levels of potassium to promote root growth and overall plant health. Avoid high-nitrogen fertilisers that encourage lush, tender growth vulnerable to frost damage.

Before and After: An autumn lawn transformation.

5. MOWING

As the growth rate of your grass slows down in autumn, you can gradually reduce the frequency of mowing. However, it's important not to stop mowing altogether.

Continue to mow your lawn regularly, keeping the grass at a height of around 2.5 to 4cm. Avoid cutting the grass too short, as this can weaken it and make it more susceptible to frost damage.

6. LEAF MANAGEMENT

Autumn leaves may be beautiful, but they can cause problems for your lawn if left to accumulate. A thick layer of leaves can smother the grass, block sunlight, and create a damp environment ideal for diseases.

Regularly rake or use a leaf blower to remove fallen leaves from your lawn. You can add these leaves to your compost pile to create nutrient-rich compost for your garden.

7. WEED CONTROL

Autumn is an excellent time to tackle persistent weeds before winter. Use a selective weed killer that targets broadleaf weeds without harming the grass. Apply the weed killer on a calm, dry day, following the product instructions.

Removing weeds now will give your lawn a head start in spring, reducing competition for nutrients and water.

By following these autumn lawn care tips, you can help ensure that your lawn remains healthy and resilient throughout the winter. With a little extra attention now, you'll be rewarded with a lush, green lawn when spring returns!

READY TO GIVE YOUR LAWN THE CARE IT DESERVES?

Lawnwise is proud to be Alvechurch's go-to destination for premium lawn care solutions, all under the expert guidance of Ross Dustan. With a passion for lawns and a commitment to excellence, Ross has established Lawnwise as the leading provider of lawn care services in the area.

To schedule a free lawn survey, or learn more about our services and treatments, contact Ross today. With Lawnwise, your lawn is in expert hands!

Tel: 07773 563231
Email: contact@lawnwise.uk
Web: www.lawnwise.uk

Village Gardening

ROWNEY GARDENS SUMMER OPENING

ROWNEY GREEN residents opened their gates to visitors this summer, as part of an open garden event, organised by the Rowney ACE (A Community Event) team.

Running over one afternoon, the gardens of Rowney Green had more than 130 visitors, who were keen to explore the beautiful range of gardens on offer.

In total, £1,200 was raised for Primrose Hospice through ticket sales, refreshments and a raffle. The event was deemed "a brilliant day", by organisers from the ACE committee, who were pleased to see the community enjoying themselves.

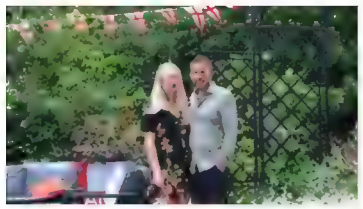
The committee also highlighted one young villager, who set up a book stall on their front garden, and donated the proceeds she made to the funds raised for Primrose Hospice.

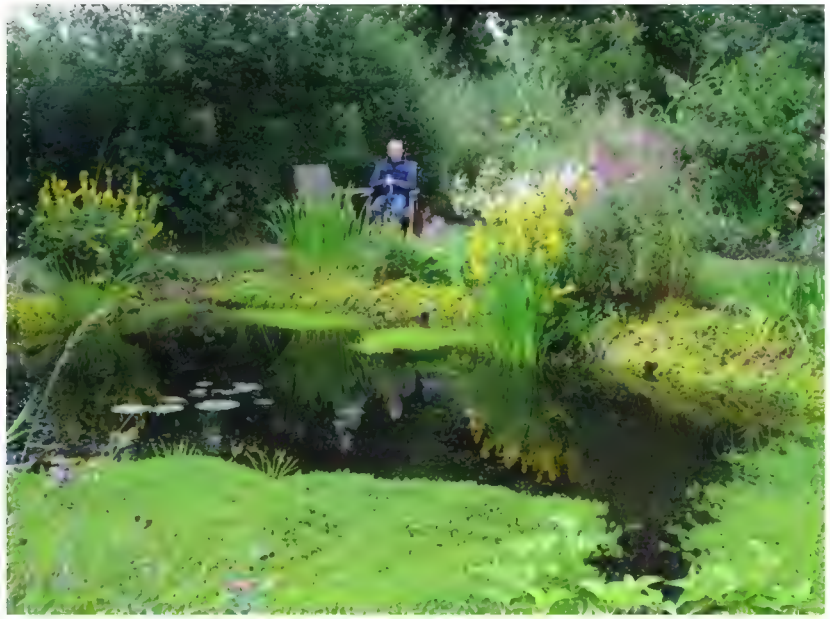
Nineteen gardens opened across the village, providing visitors with more than enough to explore, most were unable to visit all of them, due to Rowney Green being quite spread out.

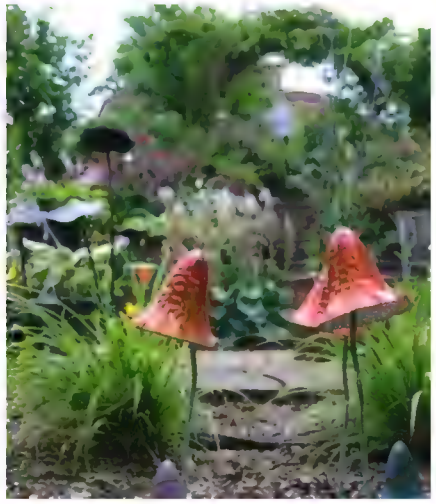
Despite the very wet weather in the first few weeks of July, the majority of the day remained mostly dry.

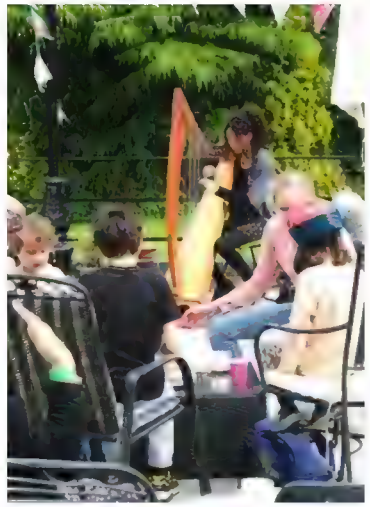
A particular highlight of the day was music played by harpist Yasmin who entertained visitors while they enjoyed refreshments in one of the gardens. Live guitar music (with requests!) was also played in another garden, so visitors could explore the garden to acoustic tunes.

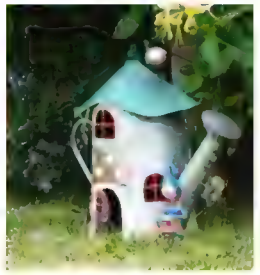
To find out more about upcoming events, follow the ACE Committee on Facebook: /ACERowneyGreen

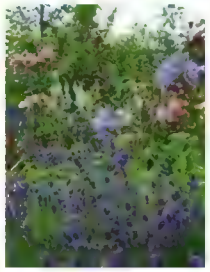












Village Gardening

Reeves Tree Surgeons
PROFESSIONAL & AFFORDABLE

- All tree and hedge work undertaken
- We will leave your garden to your satisfaction
- Fully qualified & insured for your peace of mind
- Local authority approved contractors
- We care because we want your repeat custom

01527 874143
Email: info@reevestreesurgeons.co.uk
www.reevestreesurgeons.co.uk

Hopwood TREE SERVICES
Devon Finney
Tree Surgeon
NPTC Qualified
Fully Insured
Specialist in all aspects of tree work:
Felling, removal, topping, thinning, reductions, pollards
• STUMP GRINDING
24-hour emergency service
For a free estimate and advice, call 07800 532690
hopwoodtreeservices@hotmail.com

The Gardenmaker
Get in touch today for a quote
07952 975413
www.thegardenmaker.co.uk
thegardenmaker@outlook.com

ALVECHURCH
TREE CARE & LANDSCAPING LTD
NPTC qualified tree surgeon
Fully insured
ALL ASPECTS OF TREE SURGERY UNDERTAKEN
- Stump grinding
- Hedge cutting
- Landscaping
- Grass cutting

For a free no-obligation quotation call Neil: 07834 554710
or 07791 697007 Email neil@alvechurch-treecare.co.uk

JPP Landscapes
Full Garden Landscapes
Fencing & Patios
Drive & Patio Cleaning
Aquatic Specialist
07971 341 444
JPPLandscapes@Outlook.com

To advertise your gardening business or service in The Village,
Call us on:
07536 987950
or Email:
sales@villageonline.co.uk

Garden Landscaping & Maintenance:
Driveways, Patios & Decking
Lawn Mowing
Fencing & Gates
Hedge Cutting
Garden Clearance
Hopwood Garden Services
0121 445 1253
or
0751 7367663
www.hopwoodgardenservices.co.uk
info@hopwoodgardenservices.co.uk

Sika Groundcare
Specialists in groundcare, grass cutting and vegetation management. For domestic lawns, paddocks and commercial premises.
07732 904109
sikagroundcare@gmail.com

LINDSAY STANTON
Garden Design
Make the Most of Your Garden
Creative designs for all types of garden approached with a flair for planting and sensitivity to owners' requirements.
Over 20 Years Experience
T: 0121 445 2364
E: lindsaystanton@btinternet.com

GARDENING & LAWN CUTTING SERVICE
MAKE YOUR GARDEN THE ENVY OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD!
Domestic and Commercial
Flower and Bed care
Mowing & Strimming
Hedge and Tree Care
Regular or One-Off Visits
CHATTERLEY
FACILITY AND GROUNDS MANAGEMENT
Book Now 0333 88 00 778 info@chatterley.ltd
WhatsApp 07969 046 430 www.chatterley.ltd

Autumn night delights

Amateur astronomer **Brian Watkiss** peers into the *Village* night sky.

SEPTEMBER sees the end of summer, whether you consider that to be the 1st or on the Equinox which this year is on the 22nd.

The Sun actually crosses the Equatorial Plane at 1.45pm on that day so summer ends just after lunchtime which seems kind of appropriate.

This also means the evenings get darker sooner, sunset being just before 8pm at the start of the month, but we will start to see the return of the major planets so it's not all bad news.

Let's have a look around the sky to find the first of them. New Moon is on the 3rd so we get good, dark skies to start with which will help, so face south and look high in the sky.

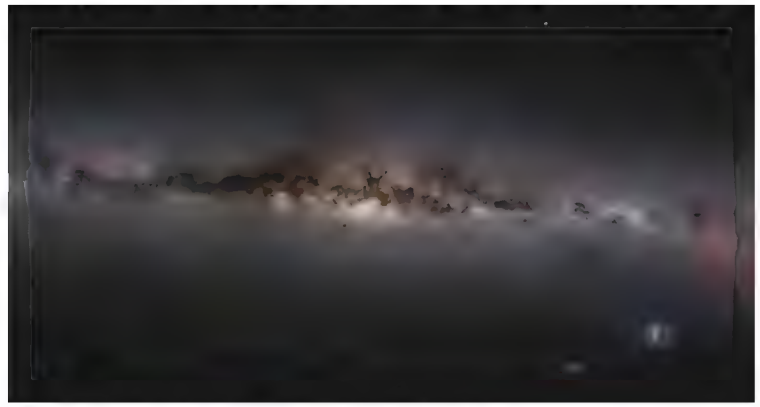
There, almost overhead is the brightest star, Vega. It sits at the top right hand corner of the Summer Triangle which becomes quite obvious as your eyes adjust to the dark.

To the left is Deneb, the tail of Cygnus, the Swan, formed by a cross of stars. Streaking across the sky at this point, along the length of Cygnus is the Milky Way, which is what we can see of our own galaxy.

It stretches from horizon to horizon but this is the area where it is most easily seen. I say easily but in the light polluted skies of Alvechurch it is quite tricky. A good cloudless clear night is needed and it only appears as a slightly milky smudge but with dark adjusted eyes it can just about be seen from a good, dark viewing position.

It continues across the top of the sky and through that "W" of stars that form Cassiopeia, over in the east.

Just below that is a giant square of stars that form the body of Pegasus, the flying horse of Greek mythology.

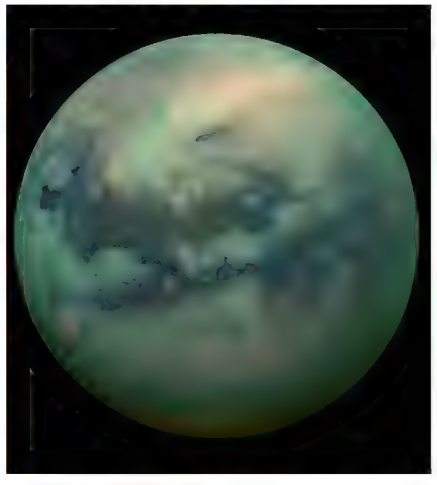


Spot it on a clear night: The Milky Way, from space.

Image courtesy of NASA.

Above: The surface of Titan.

Image courtesy of ESA.



Above: Titan from NASA's Cassini probe

Image courtesy of NASA.

You can just about make out two lines of stars starting from the top right hand star and these are his front legs and another line from the bottom right forming his head. That's all there is to this constellation, his rear legs are missing so he's upside down and legless but he's not alone in that.

These two stars of the body are Scheat at the top and Markab at the bottom and following a line downwards from them will bring you to the planet Saturn.

A must see sight through a telescope it is one of the wonders of the Solar System, well known for its fabulous rings but it also has a giant moon, Titan. This is a strange, icy cold world where methane exists in a liquid state, forming great lakes and water freezes solid.

The European Space Agency sent a probe there in 2005 and after a successful landing, returned some intriguing images of the surface, showing pebbles consisting not of rock but of water ice. The probe was called Huygens and is particularly memorable for me as I was called in from a day off to perform some "emergency editing", such was the excitement surrounding its successful deployment.

So, join me in spotting Saturn whenever you're out after dark.

EVENTS

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA will re-start at 7.30pm on 5th October at St Laurence Church Alvechuch. The first concert in the 2024/25 season will be *EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED* an exciting programme to challenge expectations including: Pachelbel's 'Gigue' (the partner to the famous 'Canon'): Rossini's effervescent 'String Sonata No. 5' and Glazunov's 'Saxophone Concerto in E flat'. www.midlandsinfonia.co.uk

THE ASKLEPIOS ORCHESTRA invite you to save the date of their Autumn Concert, which will be on 24th November 2024 in the same venue.

ST LAURENCE CHURCH AND THE ARK will be hosting their Heritage Day on Saturday 14 September between 10am – 3pm. There will be tours of the church and churchyard, local stalls, games and presentations from local groups.

THE WORCESTER-BIRMINGHAM & DROITWICH CANALS SOCIETY welcome you to their Heritage Open Weekend on 14 & 15 September. The theme this year is "Routes, Networks & Connections". The event takes place around Tardebigge Wharf, where member volunteers and volunteers from the Canal & River Trust will show visitors around the top lock and wharf, give a guided view of how the area would once have looked in industrial swing. The community narrowboat Cecilia will be on hand to take visitors on trips through Tardebigge Tunnel to Old Wharf and back.

MUSIC

ALVECHURCH COMMUNITY CHOIR usually meets in Alvechurch Village Hall on Mondays at 7.30pm with occasional pub and outdoor sessions and a live stream. The choir is inclusive and open to everyone, whether you think you can sing or not. New members are always welcome. For more information or to join or book them, see their website www.alvechurchcommunitychoir.org.uk. They start their Autumn season in the Village Hall on 2 September, are at The Crown on 9 September then back in the Village Hall for the rest of the month. They are taking booking for Christmas!

BEOLEY VILLAGE HALL hosts live music, comedy, cinema and jazz nights. On Wednesday Jazz nights the bar opens at 7.45pm, with entertainment from 8.15pm. For Friday night events, the bar opens at 7pm with entertainment from 7.30pm, and on Saturdays the bar opens at 7.15pm with entertainment from 8pm. For more information and details, contact Paul on 07973 759340 or Richard 01527 66646. The programme is subject to change if the circumstances dictate.

BEL CANTO SINGERS, the well-known 4-part Worcestershire choir, rehearse at St. John's Church, Redditch B98 7PZ on Monday evenings. They are always happy to welcome new singers. They have a very wide and varied repertoire and a huge catalogue to include pop, fun pieces, musical theatre, jazz, folk music and traditional choral and classical music along with much more. Bel Canto Singers are a friendly and social group, under the guidance of Musical Director, Liz Green and accompanist, Wendy Quirk. They are a non-profit making organisation and select a new charity each year to support both financially and with provision of their services. Just turn up at rehearsal on Mondays at 7.30pm where there will be a wide range of singing activities, light refreshments and chat. More information please contact Secretary Veronica Porter 07885 507899 or visit www.belcantosingers.org.uk

THE GEMINI Choir is seeking new singers. Info from Philip Morris on 07969 741137.

BLACKWELL Concert Band and Training Band is open to all brass and woodwind players of all abilities. To learn more about the band, book them, or find details of upcoming events, email blackwellconcertband98@gmail.com or visit www.blackwellconcertband.co.uk

SINGING For Health is a group aimed specifically at people with health problems, mental or physical. They meet on Thursdays 2-3pm at St Chad's Church, Rubery (£3 per session). Everyone is welcome!

BROMSGROVE Music Centre runs FREE weekly string orchestra, concert band and beginner group Lift Off! sessions for young musicians. New members always welcome! Sessions are run by Severn Arts at The Orchards School, Bromsgrove, on Mondays 5.45–6.45pm Individual instrumental lessons are also provided at the centre. For info, see www.severnarts.org.uk/music-centre-groups

BROMSGROVE Folk Club meets on the second and last Thurs every month at Catshill Club 8pm. For

continues overleaf

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

BEL CANTO'S SEASON OF SUCCESS

THE BEL CANTO SINGERS are a Worcestershire four-part harmony choir who have been singing together since 1990. The choir experienced enormous success in 2023/24; their Christmas concert 2023 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel church in Redditch was a sell-out. Members of the choir also entertained a local care home just before Christmas and it was lovely to see the residents join in with some festive favourites.

The choir performed in reflective Easter concerts at St Bartholomews, Tardebigge, and St Chads Church, Rubery, where donations received for the churches were gratefully accepted. They ended the year with their annual summer concert at Greig Hall, Alcester, followed by a final free concert at St Stephens, Redditch.

Each year the choir nominates a chosen charity to support and recently presented £1,000 to Redditch Foodbank. The charity nominated for support in 2024/25 is Redditch Find Your Voice, Parkinsons UK, an activity group helping Parkinsons sufferers to improve their vocal skills in a relaxed friendly environment.

The group would love to encourage new members. Rehearsals take place in St Johns Church, Redditch, B98 7PZ on Monday evenings from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. The choir has a wide and varied repertoire including pop, jazz, folk, musical theatre, classical and choral. They benefit from the guidance and support of a professional Musical Director, Liz Green, and accompanist, Wendy Quirk. In order to sing four-part harmonies they use sheet music so an experience of this is beneficial, but by no means essential.

Singing has been proven to increase our sense of well being and The Bel Canto Singers are guaranteed to do that! Their rates are hugely competitive so to find out more, visit www.belcantosingers.org.uk where you can listen to them, browse their gallery, find out times of future concerts, and read more information about the group. You can also contact them on 07985 238 334. A warm welcome awaits should you choose to give it a go.

a full list of events call Bob Bignell on 0121 476 5938 or see www.bromsgrovefolkclub.co.uk

BROMSGROVE Rock Choir offers everyone the chance to sing pop, rock and chart songs – no audition needed. Free taster sessions available. More info at www.rockchoir.com or on 01252 714276.

BROMSGROVE Community Choir meets on Thurs evenings, 6–7pm at Bromsgrove Methodist Church (main church hall).
They sing for fun and enjoyment; everyone welcome, singers or not. Contact Ruth Henley for details on 01527 527022 or 07812 145267, or r.g.henley@btinternet.com

BARNT GREEN CHORAL SOCIETY meets in the Parish Centre behind St Andrew's Church, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green, on Mondays from 7.45 - 9.45pm.
The choir sings a range of music throughout the year, performing at least three concerts. New singers are always welcome and there is no need to audition! For more information, see barntgreen-choralsociety.org or facebook.com/barntgreen-choralsociety.

DANCING

JAZZ HEELS CLASS FOR ADULTS. A new class held on Tuesdays 5:45-6:30pm at Hopwood Village Hall. For more info contact Amy on 07979408997.

TANGO ARGENTINO at Barnt Green Quakers/ Friends Meeting House on Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings. For further information: www.facebook.com/groups/tango42/announcements (no Facebook account needed).

AELFGYTHE Border Morris is seeking new dancers (female) and musicians (male or female) to join them for fun, exercise and dancing. They meet at 7.45pm every Weds in Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall. Everyone welcome. Come and play traditional folk music, or try Morris dancing. For more details call Pam on 07961 830 831.

FRENCH & Breton folk dancing meets at Alvechurch Village Hall on the first Sat each month from 2.30–5pm (Please check first by emailing alvechurchfrenchdance@gmail.com). Informal tuition and live music provided. New dancers (and musicians) welcome. £2 per session.

SEQUENCE Ballroom and Latin dancing every Mon evening at 8pm at the Longbridge Social Club, 1012 Bristol Road South, Northfield. Occasional free tuition. All welcome to a friendly fun-filled dance. Details from Kalvin on 07725 265024.

ALVECHURCH Morris Men are on the lookout for new dancers and musicians. They practise on Mondays at Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall, 8.30–10pm, followed by a "debrief" at a local hostelry. They dance in local towns and at various local and national events, and perform a world-famous (sort of) mummers play in the village every New Year's Day. No ability, fitness or co-ordination required – if you are male, 18+ and prepared to spend more time than is probably good for you in public houses, pop along to meet the group!
Drop in to any practice, contact Steve on 07375 592928 or email: alvechurchbagman@gmail.com

NANCY Butterfly Morris Dancers dance in the North-West Morris style (clogs!) and practise at Catshill Methodist Church Hall on Monday evenings ready to meet up with other Morris sides for social events and festivals. They are very happy to welcome new adult dancers and musicians. See: www.nancybutterfly.co.uk or Facebook for what they get up to. You can contact them via the website or Jane on 07726 915289.

AVONCROFT Folk Dance Group enjoys anything from barn dances to ones seen in *Pride & Prejudice* or *Poldark*. All welcome, no need to have a partner. The group meets every Thurs from 8–10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR. £2.50 incl refreshments. Info from Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or liz@the-stantons.uk or visit www.avoncroftfdg.weebly.com

CELEBRATING THE SEASON

REDDITCH CHESS CLUB celebrated their recent successes in the 2023/24 season in the Birmingham and District chess League with a get-together at the New Dilshad, Alvechurch. Having gained promotion to division one from the previous season, Dan Lambourne's team performed admirably to finish in fourth position.

The division four team, captained by David Smith, had a great season and ended up league Champions and are looking forward to division three when the new season starts in September. David also guided his team to two trophy finals winning both the Dudley Townshend cup in the BDCL and the Wheatley Cup in the Worcester League.

The club's main meeting night will continue to be on Wednesdays at 7.15pm at the Hopwood and Alvechurch Cricket Club, Alvechurch, starting on Wednesday September the 4th through to May 2025. The junior chess club is on Saturday mornings, at Alvechurch library.

BJ's BUSY Boots Line Dancing Classes: Tues 2–3pm Bromsgrove Leisure Centre; 7–10pm Stoke Prior Sports/Country Club. Thurs 1.15–3.30pm Bromsgrove Methodist Church Centre. Social Dance usually 1st Sat in month at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane. It's a fun way to exercise. For more details phone Brenda on 01527 870151.

AMY GREAVES SCHOOL OF DANCE & Fitness offers a variety of classes for toddler up to adults. Based in Hopwood, Bournville and Longbridge. Contact 07979408997 amygreaves1@hotmail.co.uk www.amygreavesschoolofdance.com

SEQUENCE dancing every Tuesday evening at 8pm at Fairfield Village Hall, Bromsgrove. Welcoming and friendly atmosphere, all levels welcome. For further details please contact Joyce & Len on 0121 682 3266.

DANCE AND FITNESS at Bournheath Village Hall including Adult Zumba, Pilates and Stretch classes as well as KS1 and Baby Ballet. For more information message 'Dance With Nikki' on social media or n.foulkes@hotmail.co.uk

LINEDANCE CLASS, every Thursday between 6pm - 7pm at Extracare Longbridge Village.Contact Bryan 07975569065 for details.

BEGINNERS LINEDANCE class, Tuesdays 6pm - 7pm at West Heath Community Centre, Hamstead House, B31 3QY. Contact Bryan 07975569065 for details.

NEW SALSA dance classes, every Thursday at the Alvechurch Inn, B48 7LD. Doors open at 6pm. Beginners classes at 7pm, with the main class at 8pm. All classes are £9 each or both classes for £15. Come on your own or with friends. Contact 07779686679.

BALLROOM/LATIN SEQUENCE dance some line dance held on the first Friday of the month (check just in case Friday has to change because of commitments in the village) from 8pm -10.30pm at Extracare Longbridge Village, B31 2FZ. Contact Bryan 07975569065 for details.

DANCING POINTE offering RAD ballet classes age 3-18. Based at St Andrews first school, Barnt Green. Contact daningpointe@outlook.com for further details.

CLUBS, GROUPS & SOCIETIES

ST GODWALD'S Community Cafe meets every other Fri from 10am–noon at St Godwald's Room adjacent to the Church Hall, Finstall Road, Bromsgrove. Friendship, cake, tea/coffee. Donations welcome— monies to St Basil's charity for homeless youngsters. More info: david-rowe876@btinternet.com

BROMSGROVE Men In Sheds is a group for anyone (male or female) who has retired or been made redundant and wants to spend time with like-minded people. The group meets Mon–Thurs, 10am–2pm at Unit 1, Metals & Ores Industrial Estate, Stoke Prior B60 4JZ. You can find more information by calling 01527 570490 or email enquiries@ageukbrwf.org.uk

BARNT GREEN QUAKERS invite you to their film screenings. Admission is free however donations are welcome. Full details can be found at The Meeting House, 6 Sandhills Rd, Barnt Green.

PLACES OF WELCOME is a growing network of local community groups who provide their neighbourhoods with places where all people can feel safe and where they can connect, belong and contribute. The network is open in St Laurence Church and The Ark on Wednesdays 10.30am-12pm, all are open to everyone and offer friendship and hospitality, free refreshments and local knowledge about the neighbourhood. Visit www.placesofwelcome.org.uk or email info@placesofwelcome.org.uk

REDDITCH Military History Society usually meets monthly in St Luke's Church Hall (Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 4JX), 7 for 7.30pm. Info from Ron on 01527 545450 or ronnieg33b@hotmail.co.uk

FRIENDS Of Bittell Reservoirs is a group of local people interested in preserving the natural environment of the Site of Special Scientific Interest at Upper Bittell, Lower Bittell and Mill Shrub reservoirs, which are important staging posts for migrant birds and wildlife. If you have an interest in preserving this unique environment and would like to help in its preservation and maintenance, contact paul_and_carrol@live.co.uk

ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY runs a regular programme of social events and guided walks, as well as maintaining local footpaths. Talks and social events are held in the Village Hall, unless otherwise noted. Entry at talks and AGM is free for members and £1 for guests, including a drink and biscuits. Litter picks start at 10am. Other social events are by ticket and details of venue, start time and price will be published by the organisers nearer the time. On Wednesday Septemober 18th at 7:30pm, Andy Griffee, author of the Canal Murders books will be giving a talk; "Dead in the Water". On Sunday October 13th at 10am will be a Family litter picking session. Meet in the Village Square. Another talk will be held on Wednesday October 16th at 7:30pm - "Working with the Red Cross in War Zones: Lighting a Candle" by Dr Frank Ryding.

REDDITCH Community Shed is a project that encourages skills, combats loneliness, and provides a sense of worth in people who are retired or otherwise wondering what to do with themselves. They have a small woodworking work shop in the Kingfisher Centre just outside Primark and they are open Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Call in for tea and biscuits and a look round. More details at www.RedditchCommunityShed.co.uk or on FaceBook. If you're in Redditch of a Tuesday or Thursday they would be pleased to see you.

THE MONDAY Fellowship group meets at the Parish Centre behind St Andrew's Church in Barnt Green at 2.30pm on the second Monday every month; £2 to include tea and biscuits and an interesting talk. Info: Maureen Frowley on 0121 445 0880.

INNER WHEEL Club of Redditch welcomes you to its monthly meetings on 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Southcrest Hotel Redditch. An international Women's Organisation, they enjoy a bit of everything; walks, talks, days & evenings out, and everything in between whilst at the same time helping the community. Contact Anne Robertson for information 07580351361. Or email redditch.innerwheel@gmail.com or visit www.innerwheel.co.uk

BROMSGROVE U3A: No longer in full time work? Activity/interest groups and speaker meetings are happening throughout the month. Check website for more: www.u3asites.org.uk/bromsgrove/home

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Welcomes Refugees is a group of volunteers providing a range of support - from friendship and practical help - for all refugees and asylum seekers moving into the district. BRWR is open to all, irrespective of political or religious beliefs, and new volunteers are always needed. More info at brwr.uk

BIODIVERSITY WALKS

Mary Green's next biodiversity walk is on Tuesday 17 September at 10.30am – just one this time. It's a slow easy walk to look at areas of good habitat for wildlife around Alvechurch. Meet outside The Crown Inn, Withybed Green. The walk takes about two hours. No need to book: just turn up.
For more information contact alvbiodiv@gmail.com

CATSHILL Carers and Bereavement Back Up Group specifically offers respite, socialising and occasional speakers to carers and bereaved in the area. It meets on the last Tues each month in the coffee bar area of Catshill Methodist Church Centre in Golden Cross Lane from 2.30pm for about 1.5hrs. All carers and bereaved welcome, as well as those who used to care for someone who has passed away or is now in a care facility. Tea and biscuits/ cake provided – no charge. Contact Di (0121 445 3595) for details and encouragement.

BROMSGROVE Speakers Club meets at The Bell at Belbroughton every other Tues, 7.45–10pm. Everyone who wants to gain confidence in public speaking is welcome, book in advance www.bromsgrovespeakers.org.uk.

RE-ENGAGE aims to help isolated elderly people by offering monthly tea parties where they can reconnect or make new friends in their own community. If you know of an elderly person who could benefit, please get in touch on 07539 276054. Guests need to be aged over 75 and living alone, and must be mobile enough to walk to a driver's car with assistance. Find info at www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk or on Facebook @ ContacttheElderlyRedditch

AGE UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire have a free Dementia Café at Finstall Village hall. It is a free social hub aimed at people with dementia, their families, and carers in Bromsgrove and the surrounding areas. It takes place every 2nd Wednesday of the month from 10.30am-12.30pm.

BROMSGROVE Photographic Society is a friendly, active and mutually supportive club for those keen to learn about, or improve, their photographic and digital imaging skills. The growing membership has skills ranging from novice to highly skilled, within wide-ranging subjects. The club meets on Tues nights, 8-10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre. For more info, visit www.bromsgroveps.com or see Facebook.

ROTARY Club of Bromsgrove meets every 2nd Tues of the month at Maekong Thai Restaurant, and every 4th Tues at Bromsgrove School, both 7pm for 7.30pm. For more info www.bromsgroverotary.org.uk or contact Ron Pearce on 07703 567982.

HEART Of England Speakers is a friendly public speaking club, based in Solihull. It is affiliated to Toastmasters International, and meets on the 1st and 3rd Tues of each month, 7.30—9.30pm, at the Silhillians Sports Club and Events Centre. If you would like to boost your confidence get in touch via www.heartspeakers.org.uk, Instagram @toastmastersheartofengland, or via LinkedIn.

REDDITCH Rotary Club meets Monday lunchtimes at the Abbey Hotel, Redditch, B98 9BE. You would be very welcome to join in. Want to be involved, hear interesting speakers, and serve your community? Contact Peter Williams on 01527 60277.

LICKEY PHAB Club is a social club where people aged 14 and over, with and without disabilities, can come together each week to have fun! It is affiliated to national charity Phab. The club meets every Mon from 7.30–9.30pm at The Trinity Centre, Lickey Parish Hall to have fun, play games, do crafts or just chat – there's also a tuck shop! More info from Louise Boother on 07814 122990 or lickeyphabclub@hotmail.com

BEACON Ladies Club meets at 8pm on alternate Weds evenings at The Hawthorns Social Club, Rednal Hill Lane, Rednal. There is a varied programme of speakers and outings, including occasional visits to the theatre. New members of all ages welcome. £12 annual membership, plus £2 fortnightly. Call Barbara on 0121 445 3456 or Anita on 445 3770.

BARNT GREEN FRIENDSHIP CLUB meets every 2nd Tues of the month at 2.15pm at Burcot Grange. Visitors £3 to include tea and biscuits. Members 50p. Ladies and gents both welcome. For more details call Rosalind on 0121 445 0598.

THE WORCESTER-BIRMINGHAM & DROITWICH CANALS SOCIETY holds regular monthly meetings in the meeting room behind The Weighbridge Pub, Scarfield Hill, Alvechurch on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.45pm. There is usually a guest speaker. They promote the upkeep of the canals to ensure that the heritage is looked after for all to enjoy and are a registered charity. Find out more: www.wbdcs.org.uk or Facebook @wbdcs.org.uk. or email contact@wbdcs.org.uk. Non-members are welcome. Free entry.

ALVECHURCH WEDNESDAY CLUB starts it's Autumn programme on the 11th September at 1.30pm and at the usual venue of the Alvechurch Cricket Club. They are holding their annual skittles match to see who will be the champion this year! Always a lot of fun as none of the group are very good, so it is usually a surprise (and surprised!) winner. Drinks, biscuits, a chat and even a prize or two, so come along and give it a try. More information from Lis on 445 3895 or Janet on 447 7870.

COFFEE, Cake and Chat is a place to meet new friends or catch up with old ones (with a dedicated baby area) on the 4th Friday of each month 10:30am-12pm at The Wheel, Blackwell. No charge, donations welcome. More info 0121 445 1425.

LICKEY Hills Local History Society meets monthly at 7.30pm in the Trinity Centre, Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES. Annual subscription £15. Non-members £3 per meeting. Please email: info@lhlhs.org.uk or visit: www.lhlhs.org.uk

BROMSGROVE (1982) PROBUS Club provides opportunities for retired and semi retired men to meet socially. A members meeting is held at Avoncroft Arts Centre on the 3rd Wednesday monthly 10am until 12pm, including refreshments and a talk by a guest speaker. Other regular activities include monthly walks, lunches including partners, snooker--, social outings and IT. For more info visit www.bromsgrove1982probus.weebly.com or contact Martin on 07717 150136.

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Soroptimists meets every 2nd Thurs of the month at Burcot Village Hall. New members welcome – pop to a meeting, email sibrsoroptimist@gmail.com or ring 07812 985927.

ALVECHURCH Historical Society has a planned programme of talks on the first Monday of the month at 7.45pm at The Ark, St Laurence Church, Alvechurch. More details from Anne Humphries on 0121 445 5955.

continues overleaf

KINGFISHER PROBUS Club of Redditch is recruiting retired and semi-retired men to join them in a friendly environment. They meet every 2nd Thurs of the month at 11.30am at the Court Leet,174 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove B61 7AY, with a short meeting at noon then lunch followed by an interesting talk given by a visiting speaker. Partners/friends welcome to join for walks, trips, golf, skittles and special lunches. Contact Chris Bailey on 01527 835802 for confirmation of date and venue. More info at www.kingfisherprobusredditch.co.uk

BROMSGROVE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at Bromsgrove Rugby Club. Doors open 7.30pm, speakers begin 7.45pm. Admission free on your first visit; refreshments available. Observing meetings are also held on the first Monday each month – bring your telescopes. More info via www.broms-astro.org.uk, www.facebook.com/bromsastro or emailing info@broms-astro.org.uk

ROTARY CLUB of Lickey Hills meets on Monday evenings, 7.15 for 7.30pm, at Hillscourt Conference Centre (NASUWT headquarters) on Rose Hill (B45 8RS). For details contact Graham Wiseman on 0121 460 1402.

SILVER THREADS, the Alvechurch club, meets on the first Weds each month at 2pm in Alvechurch Village Hall. You'll be sure of a welcome in this friendly atmosphere, where members can chat over a cup of tea. There are regular bingo sessions, and occasional days out. New members welcome. More info from Pat on 0121 447 8630.

WOODRUSH RUGBY Club "Old Dogs" meet at 8pm on the 2nd Thurs in the month at the Clubhouse, Icknield Street, 01564 822878. Open to all former players, social members and old friends for a social chat and reminisce over a glass of beer. Join us: call Mike Betts on 07960 303254 or visit www.woodrushrfc.co.uk or info@woodrushrfc.co.uk

The North Worcestershire Association of the NATIONAL TRUST hold monthly meetings with interesting speakers on 3rd Thursday 7.30pm at Tardebigge Community Hall, also walks, outings and an annual holiday. For further info email Ros257@yahoo.co.uk

Bromsgrove & District AMATEUR RADIO CLUB meets every Friday evening from 7.30pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre. The club is open to anyone with an interest in Amateur Radio. More details from the secretary Alan on 07886 000052 or secretary@bromsgroveradioclub.co.uk

COMMUNITY COFFEE morning - open to all. Free refreshments and chat. Wednesdays 10-12 at Barnt Green Baptist Church. Enquiries can be made to: events@bgb.org.uk

THE MACULAR Society Barnt Green Support Group meets on the last Fri of the month (with some exceptions) at The Parish Centre, behind St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green, B45 8NR, 2–4pm. Friendly, self-help group, proving there is more to life than this devastating eye condition. New members always welcome. For more info, ring Wendy on 0121 445 1585 or Alan on 01527 877864.

REDDITCH CHESS CLUB meets at Alvechurch & Hopwood Cricket Club, Birmingham Road, Alvechurch B48 7TA, every Wednesday at 7.15pm September - May. The club has teams playing in both Birmingham and Worcester leagues. New players are welcome - just turn up or contact Giles Stanton on 07932 053621 or David Smith on 07540 304620.

SPORT, FITNESS & HEALTH

BARNT GREEN WATERS LIMITED are hosting a Club Open Day at Upper Bittell on Saturday 11th May 11am to 4pm for those who may be interested in becoming members of the either the Fishing Club or Sailing Club, or to enjoy the natural surroundings of the estate. Full details about the Open Day can be seen on pages 28-29.

UPTON WARREN SAILING CLUB sails throughout the year at Aztec (Upton Warren) opposite Webb's Garden Centre, Wychbold. A small, friendly club with both mixed fleet racing and cruising sessions. Most members sail their own boats but there are also club boats available for members to use. See www.uwsc.co.uk to find out more or contact membership@uwsc.co.uk

JOOLISM HIIT CLASSES. Semi-PT resistance training for ladies only in a well-equipped gym in Bromsgrove. For ladies who want toned and strong bodies. Attendance must be pre-booked via julie@joolismfitness.co.uk

WOODRUSH RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB, Icknield Street, Alvechurch, B38 0EL is recruiting: Senior (Men & Ladies) U17 Colts Mini/Junior & Micros. Call 07341 256821 for recruitment or 01564 822878 (Clubhouse) email info@woodushrfc.co.uk or see: www.drushrfc.co.uk Facebook @WoodrushRFC

ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY'S WALKS are held at 2pm of the first Sunday of the month unless noted otherwise. For walks starting outside the village, please contact the walk leader if you need a lift. Occasionally, weather conditions mean that a walk must be cancelled at late notice: check with the leaders or the AVS website if unsure. Always wear appropriate footwear. Contact walks organiser Tony Brannon for more information about the walks: avswalks@gmail.com. The next walk will be on Sunday September 1st at 2pm led by Martin & Mariea Clarke: A Walk Around Hanbury Hall. Meet at Jinney Ring car park B60 4BU (or join at Hanbury Church at 2.20pm for a shorter walk) Call 07742 100007 for details.
The following walk will be on Sunday Oct 6th at 2pm; A Leisurely Walk Through The Lickeys. Meet at Lickey Hills Visitor Centre B45 8E. It will be led by Alice Wilkinson & Joan Feely 07902 618397.

BARNT GREEN FISHING CLUB controls the fishing (both game and coarse) on the Bittell Reservoirs. Contact: barntgreenfishingclub@gmail.com or Facebook @Barnt Green Fishing Club.

REDDITCH & Bromsgrove Company of Archers meet April–Sept, Mon 6.30pm and Fri 6.30pm at Meadow Park Football Ground (by Harris Brush Works – outdoors) and Oct–March on Fri 6.30pm at Studley Leisure Centre (indoors). Really friendly no-pressure club. New members always welcome (juniors from 8 years old, seniors from 18 to 80+, seasoned archers or absolute beginners). Beginners' courses run throughout the year or taster sessions by appointment. Further info from rbcoaCoach@gmail.com, rbcoasecretary@gmail.com, or www.redditcharchers.org

REDDITCH Ramblers is a growing, friendly and sociable group offering a full walks programme including walks every Sat and Sun and a midweek walk most weeks. Sun walk is usually 6–9 miles; the Sat walk is more challenging, usually 10–12 miles. Midweek walks vary, sometimes morning walks followed by option of lunch or full day walking.
The Saturday Strollers walk fortnightly (4–5 miles). Newcomers are always welcome and can walk three times with the group before deciding if they want to join. The group also arranges holidays, coach trips and social events throughout the year. Full info at redditch.ramblers@gmail.com or www.redditchramblers.org.uk

PHYSIOTHERAPY-LED Pilates Classes in Cofton Hackett, Barnt Green and Lickey Hills. Mixed ability Daytime and Evening classes available. Mother & Baby classes also run by Women's Health Physiotherapists. Small and welcoming classes aimed to improve balance, muscle tone and posture as well as overall body strength. Contact Elizabeth on 07850 604425 or elizabethalexanderltd@gmail.com or see www.elizabethalexanderphysiotherapy.com

CLUBBERCISE@ Alvechurch: Get sweat and glow! Get ready for exercise in disguise. You'll be dancing yourself happy and sweating until you sparkle, without even realising it. Mondays 7.30–8.30pm at Alvechurch School. All places MUST be pre-booked via www.leeshfitness.co.uk or 07541 625939.

POUND FITNESS@ Alvechurch: Channel your inner rockstar with this full body cardio-jam session. Using Ripstix®, lightly-weighted drumsticks engineered specifically for exercising, POUND transforms drumming into an incredibly effective way of working out. Weds 7.30–8.15pm at Alvechurch School. All places MUST be pre-booked via www.leeshfitness.co.uk or 07541 625939.

MEDITATION CLASSES for Everyone. Come and try a KIND approach to Meditation and experience for yourself the revitalising power of a relaxed, calm, clear mind, whether beginner or experienced practitioner. Classes with community and an experienced teacher, at The Ark, Alvechurch, online or a mixture. REDUCE STRESS, FEEL CALMER, SLEEP BETTER. To join us for a trail contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085, F Sally My Yoga Mind

BARNT GREEN Sailing Club offers regular sailing, either racing or casual sailing, in beautiful surroundings at Upper Bittell reservoir. For info contact secretary@bgsc.uk or see www.sailing-barntgreen.com

BRIAR Rose Field Archers is a field archery club based near Bromsgrove. There are two qualified coaches for those interested in taking up the sport. For information contact briarrosefieldarchers@gmail.com

YOGA Really Works: classes on Thurs evenings (term-time only), 7–8pm at Cotteridge Quaker Meeting House, Watford Road. Six-week blocks £45. Slow and mindful rhythmic movement in time with the breath. Accessible venue—classes open to wheelchair uses and less abled persons. Contact George on 07490 781637 or yogareallyworks@outlook.com, see www.yogareallyworks.co.uk or on Facebook @Yogareallyworks

THE RAMBLERS Bromsgrove Group: Guided walking with our group for pleasure, fitness and fun. Full programme of walks / events throughout the year. More info at www.bromsgroveramblers.webs.com or call Martin on 01527 857117 or Peter on 01527 558203.

ALVECHURCH WALKING Buddies: join a regular local walk with like-minded people who simply want to go on a local, sedate and friendly walk with no pressure. Well-behaved owners and their dogs are very welcome. The group meets at 10.30am every Thurs. For more info, search for 'alvwb' on Facebook or contact Tony on 07763 468893.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL run a series of weekly health walks around Bromsgrove and its districts. The walks are usually steady in pace and led by qualified walk leaders, and free to attend. Walks are often followed by guided sessions on the park gym equipment. Blackwell Gentle Walk, Wednesdays, 10.30am, start opposite the entrance to St. Catherine's Church. Lickey End Walking for Health, Tuesdays, 10am, meet at Lickey End Recreation Ground car park. Oakalls and Harwood Park Health Walk, Wednesdays, 2pm, meet at The Oakalls Play Area. Sanders Park Walk, Mondays, 9.50am for 10am start, meet at the café kiosk near the car park. There are three options: Short (30mins), Medium (2-3miles in 60-75mins), and Fast (3+ miles in 60mins). Bromsgrove Rural Walk, Fridays, 9.45am for 10am departure, meet in the Sanders Park car park extension. These rural walks vary between 4 and 7 miles and can involve driving, a system of car sharing has been established. Stoke Heath Health Walks, Thursdays, 10.30am, meet at Stoke Heath Recreation Ground.

SOCIAL TENNIS takes place at Rubery Community & Leisure Centre, Holywell Lane, Rubery B45 9AD on Mondays from 11.30–2.30pm. The group would welcome a few more players – just turn up or ring Keith on 0121 445 5094.

SARACEN Cycling Club is seeking new members. Men, ladies, beginners, and regular riders are all welcome. The long-established club meets regularly by the Tardebigge Pub on Thurs at 10am and Sun at 9.45am. See www.saracenroadclub.com or call Ivor on 0121 453 2287.

LONGBRIDGE Cycling Club meets weekly on Tues and either Sat or Sun. Ride pace generally at 9-11mph overall average, varied distances. Hotel and hostel weekends away, cycle camping adventures, social outings and much more. All ages, beginners, and seasoned cyclists all welcome. Call or text Deb on 07738 982161, email debweston@aol.com or see www.longbridgecyclingclub.com or Facebook @longbridgecyclingclub

MERCIAN NORDIC WALKING: come and try a taster session for fun, fitness and friendship. More info at www.merciannordicwalking.co.uk Online fitness and personal training available at www.mercianfitness.co.uk

PILATES PILATES with Steff Affleck (Rowney Green) Mat classes, apparatus (reformer/ tower / barrels etc.) 1:1 and duets. Irrespective of age, gender, health or fitness we could all benefit from understanding more about how to keep moving well. Joseph Pilates' system of exercise, using apparatus he invented, enables you to challenge what is strong, build what is weaker, exploring how you can balance the body to move away from pain and discomfort towards greater resilience and independence. Graduate of Pilates Professional Advanced Teacher Training; teaching Pilates for 17 years. Call 07759590830 or see www.steffaffleck.co.uk

BARNT Green Sports Club (Margesson Drive, Barnt Green, B45 8LR) offers racquet sports in a friendly environment, plus running and cycling groups. Clubhouse with licensed bar. More info from Nick Butcher on 0121 445 1978 or visit www.barnt-greensportsclub.co.uk

CATSHILL FC offers youth coaching sessions each Saturday morning at Catshill Middle School, Meadow Road, Catshill, B61 0JW. Boys and girls from Reception age upwards are welcome. Contact Gary on 07462 118920 or see www.catshillfc.co.uk for further info.

BROMSGROVE & REDDITCH Badminton Club welcomes players for social and league play. Playing Sunday evenings 5.40 to 7.40pm. Details from Steve Whittaker 07805 051456.

PILATES with Lottie Newberry: Physiotherapy-led Pilates classes every Monday in Alvechurch in the day and Barnt Green in the evening. Contact Lottie on lottienewberrypilates@hotmail.com. All abilities welcome.

ACTIVE SENIORS Exercise Classes at Alvechurch Village Hall, run by Bromsgrove council on Fridays starting 9.15am, £5 per class. Contact g.peart@hotmail.co.uk or call on 07828 515344 for info.

YOGA for Every-Body. Come and try a fresh approach to Yoga, that works with your body rather than against it. A slow-paced, yet powerful Yoga for EveryBody, whether beginner or experienced, flexible or wishing you were. Classes with community and an experienced teacher, at The Ark, Alvechurch, Blackwell First School, online or a mixture. MOVE BETTER, BE CALMER, FEEL GREAT! To trial a class, contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085, F: Sally My Yoga Mind

FLYING BACK TO THE BIG SCREEN

VILLAGE-MADE feature film *The Shamrock Spitfire,* will be shown at the Artrix, Bromsgrove to mark the Battle of Britain weekend with a 1940s evening on Friday 13th September.

The film, which has won more than 50 awards, was shot in locations including Alvechurch, the Lickey Hills and Rowney Green, by Ian and Dominic Higgins from Hopwood and produced by Nigel Davey from Cofton Hackett and John Dawson from Hanbury.

***The Shamrock Spitfire*, which tells the true story of Dublin-born Spitfire hero Brendan Finucane, was shown at the Artrix earlier this year and sold out for two nights. Producer Nigel said: "We are so pleased the Artrix will be showing this again, such a lovely venue in our area and yes anyone wanting to dress in 1940s clothes are very welcome! There will also be music beforehand from the Vintage Class singers". The venue opens at 6.30pm, with the film starting at 7.30pm.**

TAI CHI (Qigong) sessions in Alvechurch Village Hall on Mon 10–11am and Friday 10.30. Qigong is an integration of physical postures, breathing techniques, and focused intentions. More details Robert Hawkesford (Bob) on 07788856642 or email rhawkesford59@gmail.com

FIVE WAYS Old Edwardians' Cricket Club at Ash Lane, Hopwood: Junior, Men's and Women's teams, come and join in! Excellent facilities. Everyone welcome. Coaching for juniors on Fri evenings May to Aug. Contact Mark Tovey on 01527 835031.

NEW Ravens (North East Worcestershire Ravens Rugby League Club) based at Forshaw Heath Lane, Portway, B94 5LH. Junior training and 'little leaguers' take place on Sun mornings from 10.30am, with open-age and touch on Weds evenings from 7pm. All welcome at this family-orientated club. Contact Gail on 07515 020844 or Jason on 07957 248464 visit www.newravens.net

KINGS Norton Rhinos offers contact and non-contact rugby for children from Reception to Year 12. A safe and friendly introduction to rugby – and plenty of outdoor fun and exercise! Training takes place at KNRFC Ash Lane, Hopwood, on Sundays from 9.30–11.30am. Contact Simon Thompson on 07968 424585 or visit www.knrfc.co.uk

HOPWOOD Ladies Cycling Club meets at Hopwood Playing Field on Tuesdays at 11.30am and Wednesdays at 9.30am. For information, visit www.hopwoodladiescyclingclub.co.uk or phone Sheila Evans on 07779 530017.

MARTIAL ARTS Kickboxing/Karate at The Ark Tuesdays 6.30-7.30. For more information please visit www.forcecombatmartialarts.co.uk

SLIMMING WORLD at Cofton Village Hall, on Wednesdays 9:30am, 5:30pm and 7:30pm.

ASSERTIVENESS AND HELPING SKILLS DONINGTON TRAINING at Alvechurch Village Hall. Easy, enjoyable and effective learning. Wednesdays, pay what you think and can afford, any profits go to The Village Hall. http://tinyurl.com/DTcdates or John Talbut (0121) 445 4607.

6 WEEK MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS COURSES to help you relax, find inner peace, and elevate your life. Join them on Wednesday evenings at The Friends Meeting House in Barnt Green or online whenever it suits you. Suitable for everyone! Enrol in the upcoming courses and discover how they've been changing lives at www.MeditationWithCoz.com or contact Coz at 07770067349. Follow on Facebook/Instagram: @MeditationWithCoz.

BARNT GREEN CHUGGERS & CHAINGANG provide run & cycling sessions for mixed abilities, those wanting to stay in shape plus those wishing to improve their running, cycling & fitness all in a social & recreational environment. Club Sessions - Chuggers (run) Monday & Wednesday 7pm and Chaingang (cycling) Wednesday 7pm & Saturday 9am all from Barnt Green Sports Club. For more info or to arrange a trial session please contact kategallimore@googlemail.com

GENTLE EXERCISE CLASSES working on mobility, strength, flexibility and balance. Classes are

continues overleaf

very welcoming and inclusive and are held on: Wednesday's 1.30-2.30 at St Stephens Church Hall, Rednal and Thursdays 10am-11am Blackwell Community Hall, Blackwell. The cost is £5 per class. For information call Lorraine 07866877881

LEGS, BUMS AND TUMS every Thursday morning at The Parish Centre at 9.15am at £6 per class. All abilities welcome. Contact Natasha on 07828890774 or natasha.atkinson5@sky.com for more information.

GARDENS & FLOWERS

BLACKWELL COMMUNITY GARDEN in the grounds of St Catherine, Blackwell. Pop along to help water, plant and harvest. Info on 0121 445 1425.

ROWNEY GREEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY will not be holding their usual monthly meeting at the Village Hall on the 2nd Thursday in July but would like to remind everyone that the Main Show will be taking place on Saturday 31st August.

DODFORD GARDENING CLUB meets on the 2nd Monday each month (except August) usually in Dodford Village Hall at 7.45pm. New members and visitors welcome. More info at www.dodfordgardeningclub.co.uk or call Penny on 07706 153618.

BROMSGROVE FLOWER CLUB holds regular monthly meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Meets at 2pm, at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove B601AF. A yearly membership is available or come as a visitor & dip in & out. Refreshments & then a demonstration of flower arrangements and a raffle and you may be lucky and take one home. Further information on 07843758489 .

SOLIHULL & District Orchid Society meets on the 1st Sat each month at St George & St Teresa's Parish Centre, Station Road, Dorridge B39 8EZ. New members and visitors welcome. For information call 01926 747822 or email kenneth.johnson99@ntlworld.com. visit www.solihullorchidsociety.co.uk.

ART, CRAFT & LITERATURE

THE WITHYBED POETS are local people who write poetry and share and discuss it with each other. You don't have to live in Withybed Green, though most of their meetings are there. They meet regularly every six weeks or so. They like to read to local audiences and some of them write "poetry on request."
Their next meeting is 11 September. For details and more information contact marygreen5005@gmail.com.

PAINTING & DRAWING If you enjoy painting and drawing, try this friendly community group which meets in the Rubery Leisure Centre, Holywell Lane, on Monday mornings, 9am-1pm, catering for all ages and abilities. The facilities are excellent for both indoor and outdoor working depending on personal preference and weather conditions. Tea and coffee is provided. Places are available. For further information telephone: 0121 453 7716 (Fridays).

THE "CRAFTY LADIES" craft group meets every Monday morning in Alvechurch Library from 10am–1pm, with knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting etc. More info on 01905 822722.

BURCOT WOODTURNING CLUB offers a friendly meeting place for woodturners of all abilities and experience. A varied programme includes demos, talks, hands-on practical evenings and visits to exhibitions. The group meets on the first Thurs each month, 7.15–9.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Visit www.burcotwoodturners.org.uk

ALVECHURCH LIBRARY is available to host day and short courses such as card-making or scrapbooking. If you have a skill to teach or share and would like to rent a space, call the Hub on 01905 822722 and ask for Alvechurch Library.

AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY at Avoncroft Arts Centre (Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR), runs tutored/ non-tutored classes in Art, Textiles, Ceramics, Embroidery and Dance. Contact AAS on 01527 833829 or avoncroftarts@btconnect.com

ALVECHURCH ART GROUP meets at the Baptist Hall (rear of church) every Tues from 1–3.30pm, using all mediums except oil. All welcome, especially beginners. Friendly tuition. Call Paul on 0121 445 5437 or drop in.

ALVECHURCH LIBRARY Readers Group meets in the library on the first Thursday of the month from 2pm–3pm. New members always welcome. And don't forget that you can access online audio and e-books 24/7, free of charge, by downloading the Borrowbox app. Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/libraries

LICKEY HILLS ART SOCIETY, a friendly bunch of artists and those interested in art, meet at Longbridge Methodist Church, Bristol Road, B45 9TY, on the first Sat each month at 7.30pm. Open to artists and non-artists alike. For more info email Lyn lyndasharp2010@yahoo.com or come along – the members would love to see you.

SEW TOGETHER meets on Tuesday mornings from 9.30am to 12.30pm during term time at the new Cofton Village hall. They meet weekly to sew and socialise. All abilities are welcome and there are a variety of sewing machines to borrow if required. For more information contact Avril on sewtogether64@gmail.com or see Sew Together Cofton Hackett on Facebook.

BARNT GREEN ART CLUB meets at Barnt Green Scout and Guide Headquarters in Blackwell Road just beyond the Barnt Green Social Club. They run Tuesday morning and afternoon sessions with visiting tutors at 2 - 3 week intervals. Interested artists of all abilities are welcome. Please phone Jackie on 0121 445 4745 for details.

MARLBROOK QUILTERS meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Redditch Road, Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove B60 4JR. They are a small friendly group who would like to welcome new members. For more information contact Maggie Forknell 07973 313034 or Sheila Nunnerley 0121 445 2238.

THE SEASONS ART CLASS is an art course where you can discover your inner artist. Perfect for absolute beginners to improvers. Classes held at Rowney Green Village Hall, Bournheath Village Hall & Ullenhall Village Hall. Get in touch to find out more by emailing seasonsartredditch@outlook.com.

KINGS NORTON PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY meet at The Tennis Club, Grange Hill Road, Birmingham B38 8RE. For information contact Dave Wall Tel: 0121 458 2562, email: dave.walluk@virgin.net

FORGE MILL CREATIVE TEXTILE GROUP are a friendly group of enthusiastic local stitchers, both experienced and beginners. They meet on Friday mornings at Beoley Village Hall. They are a leisure learning and development group exploring various techniques and media to create textiles artwork. Please contact Lynda on 0121 445 3212 or Janet on 0121 445 4335 for more information.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

BABY Bounce & Rhyme is at Alvechurch Library Mondays 10–10.30am. Sing-a-long to traditional nursery rhymes and action songs.

STORYTIME at Alvechurch Library is on Tuesdays 11–11.30. Silly stories and tall tales for pre-school children to enjoy with parents and carers.

CURIOUS CUBS: An outdoor playgroup promoting nature and learning through play. Sessions run on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays for walkers to five years. Based at Barnt Green Sports Club, Margesson Drive, B45 8LR. Visit www.curiouscubs.co.uk for more infomation and to book your place.

DRAMA TOTS: Award-winning imaginary play classes for children 18 months to 5 years. Classes run term-time on Monday mornings in Alvechurch/Thursdays in Finstall (other days/ venues available). Contact Jo 07738 969460 for details.

TINY CHURCH (stay and play for under-5s and carers) meets in Holy Trinity Church, Lickey, each Weds from 11.15am–12.30pm during term times. Games, toys, snacks and stories, and a time to meet together with God. Just pop along, or contact 0121 445 1425 clive.rushton@btinternet.com

THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST (NCT) runs popular antenatal and postnatal courses to grow your knowledge and your network, allowing you to feel prepared and confident moving into the next chapter of your life. Discover and learn with other local parents-to-be, make vital connections and life-long friends in your community. Held at St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green. www.nct.org.uk/courses-workshops or call 0300 330 0700.

SOLIHULL BABY MASSAGE is at Rowney Green Village Hall on Tuesdays. A relaxed environment for parents and babies to bond through massage. Visit www.solihullbabymassage.co.uk

RHYTHM TIME is a fun, award-winning developmental music classes for the under 5's. Classes in Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Bromsgrove, Redditch and lots more. Contact Vicky 07712 675 697 or visit www.rhythmtime.net

NEW ROAD PARENTS SUPPORT for parents of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans children meets monthly in Bromsgrove. A confidential, voluntary, small support group for parents by parents. Close links with FFLAG. Visit www.newroadparents.org, email newroadparents@gmail.com or get in touch via Facebook @New Road Parents Lgbtqi+ Support Group.

THEATRETRAIN Bromsgrove, performing arts for children 4-18yrs. Saturdays 10.30am-1.30pm. For a half-price trial email bromsgrove@theatretrain.co.uk or call 07766 724834.

TUTORING both online and in-person for Maths KS1 and KS2. English KS1 through to GCSE. For more information message 'Tutoring with Penny' on Facebook or email penny_foulkes@hotmail.co.uk

PRE-SCHOOL BALLET - Pre-school (2 ½ - 4 yrs) ballet held at Barnt Green Baptist Church on Monday mornings from 10am. Contact dancingpointe@outlook.com for further details.

STAY & PLAY for under 5s and their carers running each Thursday from 9:30-11:30am during term time at Barnt Green Baptist Church, Bittel Road. Just pop along for play, singing & story time. Email familypastoral@bgb.org.uk

Blackwell Stay & Play meets on Mondays during term time at Blackwell Community Hall. All under 5s and their carers are welcome from 9.30am – 11am

WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

FINSTALL CROSS WI meets at Finstall Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. For more info see www.finstallcrosswi.org or email finstallcrosswi@gmail.com

BEOLEY WI meets on the first Tuesday of each month in Beoley Village Hall at 7pm. More info from Joan Lovett on 01527 584047 or email beoleysec@wfedwi.org.uk

BENTLEY PAUNCEFOOT WI meets at 7pm on the second Tuesday every month between April and November, and at 12pm December to March, at Bentley Village Hall (B97 5TB). More information from Helen Spence (01527 822622)or email bentleypauncefootsec@wfedwi.org.uk

BARNT GREEN WI meets at the Baptist Church at 7.30pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. For more information: Sheila Nunnerley 07465 439646.

ALVECHURCH WI meets on the second Monday each month in Alvechurch Village Hall, at 7.30pm. For more information email Lin Neal lin.neal@hotmail.com or alvechurchpres@wfedwi.org.uk

LICKEY WI usually meets on the first Tues every month at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall (Trinity Centre), Old Birmingham Road, Lickey. More info from Jenny Ryder on 0121 445 1872, Lickeywi@gmail.com or www.lickeywi.wordpress.com

HILLSIDE AT ALVECHURCH WI meets at 7.45pm on the first Weds each month at The Ark, Alvechurch. For more information contact Marian Clemons on 07586354826 or follow them on Facebook: Hillside WI at Alvechurch

BLACKWELL & BURCOT WI meets at Burcot Village Hall on the second Weds each month, at 2pm. For info call President Mrs Barbara Knight on 0121 445 3456.

HOPWOOD WI meets at Hopwood Village Hall on the first Thurs of the month at 7.30pm. For more information call Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668.

ST CATHERINE'S BLACKWELL WI meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Contact Sue Barrett for more information on 01527 596092 or susanbarratt222@gmail.com

RUBERY WI meets on the 2nd Weds of the month at 7.30pm at Beacon Church Centre, when there are speakers, activities and competitions. The 4th Weds of each month is the craft evening. Non-members are welcome. Contact Judie1055@yahoo.co.uk 07810765314.

FAIRFIELD WI meet at Fairfield village hall on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm. For further details contact Carol Hine at fairfieldwi1932@gmail.com

VILLAGE VENUES FOR HIRE

HOPWOOD VILLAGE HALL is available for hire for parties, groups and gatherings. Please contact Booking Secretary Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668 or visit www.hopwoodvillagehall.co.uk

TARDEBIGGE COMMUNITY HALL for hire: large, bright facility for functions, clubs, societies and all activities. To book call 07763 446902 or email tchbookings@gmail.com

THE WHEEL COMMUNITY ROOM IN BLACKWELL has daytime, evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire. Call 0121 445 1425.

THE TRINITY CENTRE IN LICKEY has evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire – more info on 0121 445 1425.

BARNT GREEN PARISH CENTRE has large and medium sized lounges available for regular hire for some morning and early afternoon sessions each week. Please contact the Parish Administrator on 0121 447 7097.

THE ARK AT ST LAURENCE has a large hall and kitchen, and smaller upper room for hire, for one-off and regular hires. More information and bookings please call 0121 447 7955 or email admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

ALVECHURCH VILLAGE HALL is available for hire to groups, clubs, societies, and private parties. The hall has a stage, PA system, kitchen and bar area. There is also a smaller conference room available for hire. Enquiries to the Hall Manager Andrea Ottley on 07455892909 or hallmanager.avh@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH CRICKET CLUB PAVILION is available for hire: weekdays for community groups/ clubs/societies, evening functions/private parties. Licensed bar, dance floor, kitchen area and great outdoor space. Enquiries to Stuart Brereton via 07775 714165 or ahcc.bar@gmail.com

FAIRFIELD VILLAGE HALL is available to hire for functions, groups and parties. It has a large hall with kitchen facilities. Contact the booking secretary Andrew on 07762749943 or bookings@fvh.org.uk. See website for details www.fvh.org.uk

ROWNEY GREEN VILLAGE HALL has a large hall, with stage and sprung floor (ideal for dance and exercise) and two smaller rooms. Available for one off or regular hire, ample parking. Email: admin@rowneygreenvillagehall.org

BLACKWELL COMMUNITY HALL is available for groups, functions and parties. The large hall is complemented by a new kitchen and a grassed area. Details at blackwellcommunityhall.co.uk.

BEOLEY VILLAGE HALL has a wide range of facilities, including a modern kitchen, bar, PA system, projector and screen, skittles alley and a large car park with disabled access to the hall. To book your event, meeting, party or celebration for up to 100 people, please contact Richard on 01527 66646.

THE BOATHOUSE VENUE is set in the unique location of Upper Bittell and is available to hire for Weddings, Private Parties, Wakes, Meetings, Workshops and Group Gatherings. It offers a fully equipped kitchen and licensed bar. For enquiries, email boathouse.bgw@gmail.com.

OUR LADY'S PARISH CENTRE in Rednal is available for hire for clubs, groups, classes, private parties etc Large hall with kitchen and car park. Enquiries to olhallbooking@gmail.com or 0121 453 3452.

FEATURE IN WHAT'S ON

If you would like to feature your group or event in the What's On section, the deadline for the October issue is 10 September 2024. info@villageonline.co.uk

AK FITTED INTERIORS

HALF PRICE Fitting with All September Orders*

Design & Installation | Classic & Contemporary Kitchens

Made-to-Measure Fitted Wardrobes | Bedroom Furniture

Visit us at: Saxon Park, Hanbury Road, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, B60 4AD

Tel: 01527 835924 | Showrooms also at Kenilworth, Knowle and Studley

www.akfittedinteriors.co.uk

*T&Cs apply.
Until 30.9.24